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# The Semiotic Anthropology of Soviet Film Culture, 1960s-90s.

by Lilia Avrutin ©

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# Abstract

This thesis, entitled "The Semiotic Anthropology of Soviet Film Culture, 1960s-90s", is an interdisciplinary, ritual-centered study of Soviet cinema based on the methodology of semiotic anthropology (study of cultural codes, meanings and symbols in the context of ritual processes and national values). The dissertation shows socio-cultural meanings as a system connected to the fundamental ritual needs of society, and explores transformations of ritual symbols during the turbulent changes in twentieth-century Soviet history, with the focus on 1960-90s. The dissertation has three goals: (1) to provide a theoretical basis for the anthropology of cinema, by summarizing key points of the semiotics of ritual, (2) to outline ritual symbolism and the aspects of metatextuality in Soviet antitotalitarian films of 1960-1990s, by analyzing selected filmtexts, and (3) to elaborate an interdisciplinary approach—a synthesis of anthropology with semiotics in the study of cinema and culture—by integrating theory with discourse analysis. Ritual is considered in the dissertation as one of the metalanguages of culture, and it is precisely on this basis that a comparative study of ritual and film is introduced in the dissertation.

The thesis consists of the introduction, with outline of theoretical sources, Part I, Part II and the conclusion. Part I is focused on theory and consists of the following chapters: "The Subject of Ritual" (on Bakhtin's concept of the Collective Body to be discussed as an integral protagonist of the Soviet film culture), "The Ritual Action" (on the paradigms of ritual theory, in particular, the works of Turner, which are especially important to the study of cinema), "From Ritual to Film" (a discussion of the interdisciplinary approach toward filmtext from the perspectives of interpretive and semiotic anthropology). Part II presents discourse analysis, a typological rather than chronological study of the following films in the context of anthropology and ritual studies: *Commissar, Little Vera, Repentance, Scarecrow, Freeze-Die-Revive!, The Viola Sonata, Scorpion's Gardens, Prison Romance* and *Andrei Roublev*.

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# Introduction

**Subject and Method.** The thesis is an interdisciplinary, ritual-centered study of Soviet cinema based on the methodology of semiotic anthropology. Semiotic anthropology is an intensively developing and clearly focused area in the humanities.[1] It is currently elaborating new methodologies for the study of cultural codes, meanings and symbols in the context of ritual processes and national values. As an essentially interdisciplinary approach, semiotic anthropology integrates the efforts of related disciplines such as semiotics of culture, socio-cultural anthropology, anthropology of history, of experience and of consciousness, studies of ideology, semiotics of propaganda and comparative cultural studies.

The dissertation has three goals: (1) to provide a theoretical basis for the anthropology of cinema, by summarizing key points of the semiotics of ritual, (2) to outline ritual symbolism and the aspects of metatextuality in Soviet films of 1960-90s, by analyzing selected filmtexts, and (3) to elaborate an interdisciplinary approach—a synthesis of anthropology with semiotics in the study of cinema and culture—by integrating theory with discourse analysis. Ritual is considered in the dissertation as one of the metalanguages of culture, and it is precisely on this basis that a comparative study of ritual and film is introduced in the present text. Soviet cinema, as "the most popular of all the arts" (in Lenin's words), provides a wonderful opportunity to develop and illustrate theoretical conceptions of semiotic anthropology by using the graphic and vivid materials of Soviet film culture, especially its antitotalitarian direction. The method of the dissertation will show socio-cultural meanings as a system connected to the fundamental ritual needs of society, and explore transformations of ritual meanings during the turbulent changes in twentieth-century Soviet history, with focus on 1960-90s.[2] The dissertation is also intended to contribute to the development of culturological and ritual studies, and to show how the latter is important for understanding contemporary cultures, particularly those that have experienced totalitarianism and a need for ritual transformation.

The post-Stalinist period, 1960-1990s in Soviet cultural history unites, from the perspective of typology of cultures, four distinct cultural epochs, which have been defined as—Thaw (1956-1968), Stagnation (1968-1985), Perestroika (1986-1991) and post-Soviet period (1991-present). However different, they all are characterized by a new degree of freedom on the one hand and new post-Stalinist forms of the state mind control on the other. People were not killed by the millions or sent to concentration camps anymore, but the government still prevented freedom of speech and controlled cinema as one of the most effective official institutions of ideology. The Thaw brought some liberation and raised hopes for a more democratic society, but these were abruptly ended with the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, marking the beginning of the Brezhnev era—a long and dark period in Soviet history called Stagnation. The majority of films discussed in the thesis belong to that particular cultural period—they were produced and/or prohibited during the Stagnation (*Commissar, Scarecrow, The Viola Sonata, Andrei Roublev*) or they reflect upon the cultural legacy of totalitarianism (*Repentance, Freeze-Die-Revive!, Scorpion's Gardens, Prison Romance*). After the spiritual revival of the 1960s, the cinematography, as a highly influential mechanism of propaganda, was especially carefully guarded by the state. The confrontation between the artists and censorship sharpened during the Stagnation and took the form of a hidden cultural war. As all studios were the government's property, the filmmakers had to make their scripts look like ordinary texts of Soviet culture in order to have them accepted and financed. Every plot, therefore, on the level of idea and scenario had to fit the ceremonial mode of the official culture, one of the narrative patterns of Soviet myth-makings. It was usually on the level of actual filmmaking that drastic changes were made—a turn of a "totalitarian text" into an antitotalitarian. All kinds of devices, including ideological allusions, dialogues with 'accidental' political hints, metaphorical imagery, visual cinematography and the film structure itself, were a part of the multidimensional antitotalitarian cultural code used by filmmakers and intelligible to the audience. The directors had to constantly employ and develop allegorical and coded languages, cinematic metalanguages, to make the viewers read between the lines. An Aesopian language, very familiar to the audience, has been a formatting structural part of both Russian and Soviet cultural traditions. Ritual symbolism, therefore, has naturally fit the pattern of highly developed diverse symbolic languages of culture, among other forms of hidden ideological communications. And it is by means of ritual—one of metastructures and metalanguages of culture—that Soviet antitotalitarian filmmakers were making their messages deeply affect the public on both conscious and unconscious levels. By using complex metaphors and dominant cultural symbols, the antitotalitarian filmmakers opposed the regime's system of meanings, trying to alter and re-structure from the inside its monolithic mythological power.

The subject of the dissertation could be defined as "screening the ritual", given its specific intention to show hidden ritual symbols and processes as revealed on both the conscious and subconscious levels of Soviet/post-Soviet film culture.[3] In the context of ritual studies, this thesis is based predominantly on the ritual theory of Victor Turner—the most advanced theorist of ritual of the recent decades—and the works by his followers.[4] Development of the ritual mode within the structure of cinema maybe referred to as an evolution and a modern form of "iconofilic religions," which, as Victor Turner points out, are associated with an especially complex and elaborate system of ritual images. In these religious modalities, "symbols tend to be preeminently visual, and exegesis is bound with the ritual round."[5] Blending ritual and socio-semantic studies of film, the dissertation introduces a basic understanding of film as a ritual structure deeply connected with a system of sacred/profane meanings, ritual symbols and root-metaphors, as a mediator and facilitator of ritual processes in contemporary culture. The research will contribute to the understanding of totalitarian and post-totalitarian cultures, particularly social roles, meanings and symbols from the angle of ritual as reflected by cinema. The dissertation reinterprets various famous and lesser-known films of post-war Soviet cinematic history, such as *Commissar, Little Vera, Repentance, Scarecrow, Freeze-Die-*

*Revive! The Viola Sonata, Scorpion's Gardens, Prison Romance* as models of ritual structures. Many Soviet filmtexts have been previously discussed from various viewpoints by Soviet and Western scholars; approaches have often been different and even polar, however, all have remained within the boundaries of social studies or film studies.[6] The dissertation will show that both totalitarian as well as antitotalitarian cultures widely use the power of ritual symbolism.

**Interpretive Anthropology and Cultural Critique.** Marcus and Fischer argue that since the 1960s anthropology has been developing towards an experimental ethnographic writing.[7] Accordingly, another definition of one of the methods of this research is experimental writing, in a form of interpretive anthropology, as applied to a national film culture.[8] And as Marcus and Fischer point out, a combinations of ethnography and literary/film criticism (which characterizes a method of the present study) is one of the modalities of interpretive anthropology.[9] In methodological terms, an interpretation based on anthropology as a logical system can be referred to as an outcome of the semiotic anthropology of culture. Experimental writing, stress Marcus and Fischer, has also brought renewed attention to anthropology's critical function, which is to use knowledge of other cultures to examine the unconscious assumptions of our own. According to Marcus and Fischer, interpretive anthropology naturally takes upon itself a mode of cultural critique. This integral methodology is a logical development of my practice as a film/culture critic in the Soviet Union during 1973-91, as well as my study and research in literary theory, semiotics, anthropology and comparative cultural studies at Western Universities during 1991-97. The Russian tradition of literary and film criticism has been strongly associated since the nineteenth century with modes of cultural/social critique. The present dissertation, written by the researcher who now lives in the West and has become a part of North American society, naturally integrates a cultural critique of both totalitarian culture and Western mass culture.

Ritual criticism, an approach introduced by Ronald Grimes and a modality of cultural critique, can be effectively applied to film culture as a ritual criticism of cinema. Although ritual is a metasystem, according to Grimes, it is not beyond cultural critique; one can and should criticize particular rituals with respect to their ritual goals. From this standpoint, a film may be investigated in terms of how it fits the society's ritual need. It is important to understand how a certain film functions as a redressive action, addressing culture's urgent and fundamental need in resolving ongoing social dramas. What Turner defines in the context of his anthropology of experience as a "redressive action"—a crucial function of ritual performance as a resolution within the four-stage structural process of a social drama—has been always associated in the Russian tradition of cultural critique with art's moral responsibility and its impact on society. Ritual criticism integrates the best possibilities of both film critique and anthropological theory/semiotics of ritual.

The concept of ritual, with its emphasis on a strong structural organization, helps to avoid the weak point of poststructuralist critique—the lack of attention to boundaries and structures (a text as being easily penetrated through and determined by endless mythological narratives), while it takes advantage of its strong point—the discussion of a single text in the context of macrocultural processes and metameanings, with special focus on society's ritual need. In fact, a poststructuralist approach, with its postulation of the "death of the author" (Barthes) and emphasis on myths, has something in common with the ritual understanding of film, where the latter is considered a manifestation of macrocultural ritual processes rather than the creation of an individual author. However, in the context of Bakhtin's conception of the Collective Body (to be discussed further in the text), a film as a stage within the metaprocess of culture does not deny the presence of an author. A film-ritual manifests a "metapresence" of another "author"—the Collective Body—which determines and "directs" the very cultural process. Interpreting films in the context of anthropology enriches the understanding of Soviet and post-Soviet cinema and culture, as well as film/culture theory in general. It also has a metatextual and methodological significance, as the dissertation reflects upon the need in a multidisciplinary approach, as well as the significance of ritual studies for wider discussions of modern cultures.

In the epoch of postmodernist and poststructuralist approaches towards the analysis of cultures, interpretive anthropology may be one of the most effective ways to avoid overinterpretation, which, as Eco emphasized has become a wide-spread loss of theoretical structure and criteria in the discussion of cultural phenomena.[10] The semiotic anthropology, with its strict centering structure of ritual as a pivotal point, becomes the theoretical context that limits and directs the interpretation of filmtexts. However, it is the archetypal richness and metacultural significance of ritual process that makes the chosen theoretical limit of this research still wide enough to adequately discuss the most essential and topical issues in cultural studies.

While the methods of interpretive anthropology are innovative, they are based on the most important paradigms of cultural theory. For example, defamiliarization, emphasized by Marcus and Fischer as a technique of anthropology as cultural critique, has also been a key concept of literary theory (as originated by the Russian Formalism in the 1920s).[11] The devices of defamiliarization—reading a modern text through the prism of ritual—will be employed in my film analyses in the present study. Corresponding cinematic techniques used by the filmmakers (for example, various types of "monster-making," in Turner's terms)[12] will also be discussed and emphasized.

Deviations from cathartic transformative mechanisms of the ritual process will be discussed as a serious problem in any type of society (including both Soviet and Western), for they preclude the resolution of social dramas. Among other objects of methodological critique in the present study will be the tradition of "syntagmatic reading" in film studies—focus on a story line referred to exclusively in terms of contemporary culture. In a wide sense in terms of ideology and methodology of the dissertation, critical emphasis will also be focused on Marxist aesthetics, socialist realism, totalitarian propaganda, naked sociologism and metaphysical/positivist approaches in the humanities.

**Ritual Motifs.** Perhaps it will come as a great surprise to the reader to discover the enormous role which ritual meanings, suppressed in the 'collective unconscious,' have played in Soviet film culture, functioning as mediators between the people's deep-seated beliefs and the transmission belts of ideological mechanisms. I shall take as an illustration of the method a few films which have marked Soviet cultural epochs. In the famous *Cranes are Flying* (*Letiat zhuravli,* 1957) by Mikhail Kalatozov, it was the magic link—a connection between the Woman's love and the Warrior's survival in distant battles of the World War II.[13] This magic link emerged from the depths of ancient faith, in fact made up the new social plot and facilitated further diffusion of the anti-Stalinist ideology of the *thaw.* As the heroine commits adultery by getting involved with another man—something usually defined in Russian culture as a betrayal—her fiancée-soldier immediately becomes "open for a bullet" (vulnerable to death) and dies. This link was certainly a part of the popular subconscious belief and still powerful faith in woman's magic power, deeply rooted in Slavic paganism and sacred values of matriarchy. This sacred connection became the subject of social and moral significations determined by the new post-Stalinist system of meanings in the film plot. However, socio-semantic significations in cinematic structures would not have been effective without involving the unconscious authority of ritual symbols. Betrayal (in this case adultery), the worst kind of misdemeanor, symbolized in this film Stalinism itself, manifesting the new ideology of thaw. The betrayal of the commitment, of the young man's and woman's emotional and moral unity, was interpreted /signified in *The Cranes Are Flying* as a rupture of the sacred magic link—the destruction of the natural power that connects loving human beings.

In the famous movie *I am Twenty* (*Mne dvadtsat' let,* 1965) by Marlen Khutsiev, another emblem of the new thaw culture of the 1960's, the plot was based, in ritual terms, on the young protagonist's communication with his ancestor's spirit. The ghost—father, who died in World War II at the age of 19 before his son was born, is even 'younger' than his son in the film story. The son has never seen his father alive, and the only link he has with his father is through the ghost—his guardian spirit. As is typical for ritual communication between the initiating and the initiator, the father is supposed to import sacred knowledge to his son during his visits; they talk about the most serious spiritual issues of life, like faith and cynicism, protest and social responsibility, etc. However, the counterpoint with the traditional ritual structure and the paradoxical use of ritual in the film is revealed when even the ancestor's spirit with his magic powers cannot help. Never having lived in the extremely contradictory time of post-Stalinist Russia—a 'freed' country, but already shadowed by the coming stagnation, the father does not know the answers. The dead ancestor, even with all his sacred knowledge is incapable of answering his son's questions. These are the key questions of the thaw—is it freedom or a new trap—'still to believe or not to believe anymore?'—that the fathers' war generation—a generation killed young—has been never exposed to. Thus, the protagonist, the twenty-year old son, who was not given sacred wisdom by the ancestor—*magic helper* (in Propp's terms),[14] is left to answer for himself the 'to be or not to be' question of his time.

A political satire and phantasmagoria, *Sideburns* (*Bakenbardy,* 1990) by Yuri Mamin showed a new nationalistic organization that put Pushkin on its flags and proclaimed him a symbol of their movement. The very situation is an absurd and grotesque, as it could be in American culture, if a newly emerged fascist political group proclaimed Shakespeare its symbol of inspiration. People's love of Pushkin achieved in Russian culture a status of cult, of worship. In the film, all the members of the ambitious extremist group dress like Pushkin and wear sideburns like him. Thus, identifying themselves with the cultural hero's image, acting *'in the name of Pushkin'* becomes a ritualistic action on the part of political extremists. Wearing the mask of the ancestor's spirit, they hope to acquire his magic; *sideburns* in the film are the signifiers of a magic ritual mask capable of transferring power into the hands of those who wear it. In trying to seize the powerful ancestor's magic in order to maintain their political order, 'sideburns' create a neo-mythology of their own, based on the wide-spread worship of Pushkin, hence, reviving ritual structures in culture. However, the director's film-antiutopia can also be considered not only a social, but a ritual action on the part of the antitotalitarian culture: by recreating a negative possibility and living it through in the movie, he intended to effect peoples' social future.[15]

In another grotesque comedy by Mamin, *Window to Paris* (*Okno v Parizh,* 1993), desperate and impoverished neighbors discover in an old St.Petersburg communal apartment a wall with the magic door. A small, dark, "forbidden" room, where an aristocratic lady from the Czarist *past* (old witch or an "ancestor spirit"?) lived and suddenly vanished—as the neighbors think—ended her life, appears to reveal a hidden channel to the other world. It is the window to "Paris"—the beyond, the wonderland, which in the dreams of many Russians has been always associated with Paris. The film exposes the characters' inability to focus on building a better life for themselves and their obsessive fantasizing about "one-step-to-heaven"—a magic door that leads to prosperity and bliss. As much as the characters never stop dreaming about leaving for good for Paris-Paradise, they are at the same time scared to death of *Change* and of the *Outside world.* Although the Iron Curtain has fallen long ago, something else—fear? habit?—keeps them *Inside,* which appears to be a magic space, vicious circle, and which nobody can leave ('*zagovorennoe mesto*'—a spellbound place, in Russian folklore). Instead of making efforts to settle down in heaven, the characters steal goodies from it, bringing them back to their destroyed apartments. *Window to Paris,* a dark carnival on the ruins of Soviet self-identity, with bitter irony and wonder, shows the hustling and buzzing of little gloomy people, who can be happy neither there nor here. And even after the discovery of the *dreamed of magic channel to the beyond*—a substitution for common sense and the habit for everyday work—they cannot dare to cross the threshold. Their imagination for a better life doesn't go further than stealing "stuff" from the otherworld. A TV, an old

French car and other belongings of the Parisians, inhabitants of heaven, are being dragged and pulled to the homeland through the magic door. Stealing thus appears in the film to be the ultimate utilization of the sacred channel.[16]

Ritual motifs may be found in many films of Soviet /post-Soviet cinematic history, such as *Chapayev, Circus, Ivan the Terrible, Young Guard, Ballad of a Soldier, Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors, Trial on the Road, The Beginning, Wings, Swimmer, It, Letters from a Dead Man, Wishing Tree, Burnt by the Sun, Prisoner of the Mountains,* and many others. Films of Andrei Tarkovsky alone (the most outstanding post-war Soviet director) represent a whole distinct Universe of ritual motifs. His films *Ivan's Childhood, Andrei Roublev* (original title *Passion for Andrei), Solaris, Mirror, Stalker, Nostalgia* and *Sacrifice* (original title *The Witch*) are so rich in ritual meanings and images that their study in the context of semiotic anthropology would require a separate manuscript.[17] The overwhelming role of ritual symbolism in Soviet cinema to be discussed in this dissertation seems especially paradoxical if we take into account the degree to which the issue of religion, ritual or magic was subjected to censorship. However, as the thesis will show, even banished to subliminal levels of consciousness and the deepest levels of narrative structures, the ritual played a key role in many film plots and in the re-signification of important ideological meanings in Soviet culture. By unfolding plots of Soviet films, the dissertation will show the interaction between ritual and cinema, and the influence of ritual structures on conscious and subconscious levels of culture.

**Theoretical Plot.** Another essential theoretical goal for this research is the integration of Bakhtin's and Turner's cultural theories, which have surpassed the framework of the disciplines in which they started—philology and anthropology. These two scholars never met and most probably never read each other, but their works have many profound and topical ideas in common. The striking similarity between the conceptions of both scholars is revealed through the pathos of a highly dialectical—processual in Turner's terms and dialogical in Bakhtin's—approach to culture, language and society. A comparative analysis of their theories, as well as the efficiency of their integration within semiotic anthropology have so far been overlooked. The dissertation is intended to prove Bakhtin's and Turner's methods to be effective theoretical tools for a semiotic-anthropological reinterpretation of culture. However, I will not only give credit to this theoretical heritage, but will conduct an original scholarly research.

This study, with its emphasis on the connection between ritual and cinema, would never have been possible without Turner's revolution in anthropology, the turn from positivism to dialectics in ritual studies. Grimes wittily called Turner a "kind of academic fool."[18] His words can be interpreted as a reference to a ritual fool, shaman-practitioner, the initiating of the transformative performance. A ritual fool, or an archetypal clown is endowed with a special "vision," capable of seeing what ordinary people cannot. Turner challenged the established conceptualization of ritual and, as Grimes puts it, "told us that rites are hot seedbeds of change; that rituals not only control process, they generate it; that rituals not only mark boundaries, they evoke phasic motion in a culture."[19] Turner's innovative ideas of ritual have currently achieved the status of the semiotics of ritual and have became a classical theory.[20] Turner never studied film culture, but being an author of universal paradigmatic conceptions on ritual structures in culture—to be discussed further in the text—he provides a profound basis for understanding cultural paradigms of cinema. On this basis, Victor Turner must be given special credit among the scholars who have contributed the most to the semiotic anthropology of cinema.

The diversity of semiotic and anthropological concepts, well and lesser-known introduced in the dissertation will be theoretically organized around one focal concept. The 'theoretical plot' of the proposed manuscript will focus on the concept-protagonist, that is the **Collective Body** (*rodovoe telo*), derived from Bakhtin's writings. The Collective Body is presented in the thesis as a necessary bridging concept between the domains of Soviet studies, film studies, semiotics and anthropology. From the semiotic-anthropological angle, discussed above, characters within various cinematic plots, like the dead father and his son, the soldier and his beloved, or the collective image of the people in such films as *It, Scorpion's Gardens, Whiskers,* etc. are seen as integral parts of the living Collective Body and the modes of its representation in film culture.[21] The Collective Body is a concept capable of shedding light on connections that otherwise would remain invisible—(re)identification and (re)orientation of an individual within the context of a sought for vital unity.[22] The Collective Body concept manifests a new system of syntagmatic /paradigmatic interactions among the characters: individuals and groups within the narrative structure, which are determined by the logic of ritual. Ritual symbols and structures, shown in the film plots, will be analyzed in relation to the survival of the Collective Body in twentieth-century Soviet history. This survival will be discussed as the ultimate historical aim of the ritual process. The Collective Body will serve as a guiding concept for the methods of semiotic and interpretive anthropology as an organizing force for the discussion of complex theoretical issues. It will function as both a distinct theoretical concept and a powerful metaphorical/rhetorical device. The Collective Body, a central issue in the Bakhtinian theory of culture, is still underestimated in contemporary scholarship. However, this concept is primary to such notions as the *grotesque body, metaphorical body, mythological body,* which should be considered derivatives of the concept of the Collective Body.

According to Bakhtin, it is not an individual but a Collective Body that is the true subject of culture. Turner's outstanding theory of ritual helps us to understand the existence of the Collective Body in time and action, in the context of the ritual processes and functions. The image-concept of the Collective Body will help to focus multidimensional theoretical analysis and make (re)interpretation of the collective identity (*"people's mass,"* in terms of propaganda) on the Soviet screen consistent and corporeally human. The true—not falsified by visual demagogy—*fate of the Collective Body* as a metaplot of culture will be traced throughout Soviet/post-Soviet history.

Turner emphasizes three properties of the ritual symbols: condensation, unification and polarization.[23] The structure and properties of the Collective Body as a ritual symbol may be inferred in the context of Turner's symbolic anthropology, from three groups of data.[24] This classification can accordingly be represented within the sphere of film studies as the following:

1) "external form and observable characteristics" (the film itself: exegesis, narration);[25]
2) "interpretations offered by the specialists and by laymen"/the initiated/shamans (interpretations offered by the scholars, critics and filmmakers themselves, i.e. film reviews and analyses by film scholars);
3) "significant contexts" (Russia's pre-revolutionary, Soviet and post-Soviet social, political, historical and religious contexts; this includes, for example, actions of the censorship or comments from the general audience in letters and newspapers).

**Ritual and Power.** The idea of the *Collective Body* has an enormous political valence, and may be metaphorically equated to a nuclear weapon in the psychological wars. That is why the study of its modalities in cultural and ritual processes is of great importance. In the Soviet system of meanings, the Collective Body can be associated with the notion of 'people'—a central concept of socialist realism—a sacred figure in political demagogy and totalitarian socio-cultural politics: "the people are everything, the individual is nothing". As a powerful psychological weapon, this concept can indeed be employed for ideological purposes: history has shown how antihuman social formations may be developed on its archetypal basis. However, the elaboration of the *Collective Body* concept will so to speak help to 'win the enemy on his own terms and on his own territory,' because it helps to reconsider how the key concepts of totalitarian visual propaganda—collective identity, mass and people—were originated and functioned as effectual ideological signifiers in Soviet semiosphere. As a dominant ritual and cultural symbol, the Collective Body has an enormous power, and this power was misused and abused by Soviet ideology, which demagogically exploited it for political ends. Representations and misrepresentations of the Collective Body will be discussed in relation to the material of various filmtexts of antitotalitarian orientation. Soviet film culture studied from a new semiotic-anthropological angle will contribute to the developments in post-totalitarian culture and interdisciplinary methodologies in the humanities and social sciences.

**Theoretical Sources: Crossing The Boundaries.** Although the works by Bakhtin and Turner prevail as the main theoretical sources for the method employed in this research, there are important additional sources that should be mentioned. The predecessors of semiotic anthropology of cinema were not only renowned in their disciplines, but also initiated innovative cross-boundary approaches, destroying conventional barriers between the disciplines. Their works help us to understand how different semiotic systems, such as ritual, cinema and Soviet culture, may interconnect within a filmtext. The authors contributed to the semiotic legacy of ritual, and to the ritual legacy of cinema are presented from a cross-disciplinary perspective in the groups of theoretical sources outlined below.

*From Film Studies toward Ritual Studies.* The very possibility of a comparative analysis of film and ritual was initiated and emphasized in the 1930 by Sergei Eisenstein, the great filmmaker and film theorist.[26] Later Vyacheslav Ivanov, a co-founder of the Moscow-Tartu semiotic school, published and interpreted the ideas of Eisenstein in his book *Essays in the History of Semiotics in the USSR* (1976).[27] By placing Eisenstein's theories in contemporary scholarly context, Ivanov developed his film semiotics. Both theorists can be considered the key figures in the development of the semiotic anthropology of cinema. Over recent decades, Yvette Biro was one of few scholars who articulated the ritual nature of cinema.[28] In spite of the book's theoretical weakness and misinterpretation of ritual in cinema as expressiveness, the importance of Biro's *Profane*

*Mythology: the Savage Mind of Cinema* (1981) remains in focusing the attention of film scholars on unresolved issues of film theory in respect to ritual nature of cinema. Jean Baudry's theory of apparatus, one of the key building blocks in contemporary film theory, should be mentioned as one more bridge, emerging between film studies and anthropological theory.[29]

*From Theater to Ritual.* Paradoxically, the history of theater theory has had more connections with the theory of ritual than has the history of film theory. Rephrasing the title of Richard Schechner's book, *From Ritual to Theater,* one can say that the actual route in twentieth-century drama theory was in fact the reverse—from theater to ritual—and not vice versa, as might be expected from the evolutionary viewpoint. The rediscovery of ritual and its importance for theater came from theatrical experiments and a search for creative imagery, as well as from the borderline, most paradoxical theories of theater.[30] Early film theory, in its attempts to emancipate from the bosom of theater, ignored theater theory of the period 1910-30, thus throwing out the baby with the bath water. As avant-garde art, cinema (theory) tried to distance itself from the obsolete forms of bourgeois theater. However, its theorists ignored the new revolutionary developments in theater theory associated with the understanding of ritual nature of performance, which could have effectively influenced film theory in its very early stages. The first among theater theoreticians who introduced an anthropological perspective on theater was Nikolai Evreinov, Russian modernist playwright, director and theorist, in his book on ritual nature of theater, *Theatrical Instinct* (1903).[31] The second case of "ritual inquiry" (or "ritual quest') in theater, is associated with theater practice rather than theater theory. *Hudibbuk* ("the Spirit," in American versions, *The Dibbuk*) was a unique performance staged in 1922 at the Moscow Jewish Theater "Gabima" by the great director Evgeny Vakhtangov. Based on a Jewish legend, *Hudibbuk* became one of the most powerful re-enactments of ritual in twentieth-century theater. According to American film theorist Ira Konisberg, its later cinematic versions have had an important influence on many motifs in twentieth-century film history.[32] In European theater of the 1910s-1930s, the concerns about its ritual nature were, so to speak, in the air, it was Antonen Artaud who brought attention to the "theater of cruelty" (as he called ritual theater) in his book, *Theater and Its Double* (1938).[33] The mysterious "double" in Artaud's terms, or instinct in Evreinov's (or in terms of Vakhtangov's aesthetics, "fantastic realism" and "psychological grotesque") all refer to a notion which had not yet been named—the ritual dimension of the performance. Jerzy Grotowski, Polish founder of experimental theater, who gained his "ritual wisdom" from philosophical training and religious experiences in India, refocused in the 1960s the attention of world theater community on the ritual nature of performance.[34] Bertold Brecht's notion of theatre as a metacommentary on the life of society has added another necessary dimension to the semiotic anthropology of performance. Once more, theater practice or, more exactly, "meta-experience" (action and philosophy at the same time) stimulated and influenced theater theory—something highly typical for ritual as a syncretic archaic form of philosophy, art and religion as an integral whole. In the 1970s, Richard Schechner, theater director and theoretician, initiated similar experiments in "ritual theater" in the United States. At the same time he started to develop his theories of performance based on the notion of ritual. Both his scenic experiments and theoretical endeavors influenced Turner and induced his interest in theater. Later it stimulated the extension of Turner's universal theory of ritual into the sphere of performance and drama."[35]

*From Russian Literature to Ritual Studies.* From the very beginning, the direction of the Soviet Moscow-Tartu semiotic tradition, lead by Lotman and Ivanov, developed as a semiotic anthropology rather than pure semiotics.[36] It is from this perspective, most of the works on Russian literature and culture were written in the *Tartu Collections* series. In the West, Katerina Clark's book on the Soviet novel is the most distinct manifestation of the ritual approach towards Soviet culture and literature.[37] Clark's book has special value for the study of narrative structures of Soviet art in the context of culture and ideology and the ritual nature of modern story-telling.[38] Her approach was initiated in the early 1980s, approximately at the same time that when Baudry introduced his theory of apparatus into film theory, and was perfect proof of the ideological organization of fictional worlds based on the materials from Soviet mainstream literature, thus contributing not only to the interdisciplinary study of the Soviet novel but also to the ritual semantics of fictional worlds.

*From Literary Theory toward Myth/Ritual Critique.* Literary scholars in the 1920s-1930s drew upon the developments of Frazer and the Cambridge Ritual School in anthropology. The ritualism of the Cambridge school facilitated the discovery of the cyclic model within the mythological idea of time, and raised a question concerning the correlation between myth and ritual. The group called "New Criticism" was the first which emphasized in the 1920-30s ritual in literary studies.[39] This tradition developed into the myth-ritual literary criticism, which later in the 1950-1960s synthesized the ritualism of the Cambridge group with Jungian philosophy in the study of mythological archetypes and their representation in literature. All over the world, in Western Europe, Russia and North America, scholars such as A.N. Veselovsky (historical poetics), Vladimir Propp (semiotic and anthropological narratology), Olga Freidenberg (mythopoetics) and Northrop Frye' (mythocritique) marked the developments of myth-ritual theories of literature and culture.[40] For example, Soviet scholar Olga Freidenberg anticipated the structural approach to myth and literature. In so doing, she was a true forerunner of the likes of Mikhail Bakhtin, Claude Levi-Strauss and the members of the Moscow-Tartu School of Semiotics.[41] The works on literary theory and myth by Lotman, Ivanov, Segal, Piatigorski, as well as by L. Dolezel on the semiotics of fictional worlds, should be emphasized in respect to the development of the anthropology of cinema.

*From Narratology to Discourse Analysis in Semiotic Anthropology.* Theoretical works by Vladimir Propp on the semiotic anthropology of the plot are of special interest for this study. Propp is well-known in the West as a structuralist and author of the classical work *The Morphology of the Folk Tale* (1928)—the first work to introduce semiotic narratology, a structural analysis of fictional worlds, and the semiotic glossary of ritual characters. But Propp's work on the semiotics of the plot, however famous, is only an integral part of his multidisciplinary theory. The second integral part—Propp's anthropology of the fairy tale—was developed in his book *Historical Roots of the Wondetale* (1946), and is fundamental to an understanding of Propp's theory as a methodological whole. Yet this important work has been unknown in the West.[42] The two books represent accordingly the semiotic and anthropological approach towards narrative studies, constituting Propp's integral semiotic anthropology of the plot, a complex study of narrative systems in their origin and functions.[43] Following Propp, Dolezel has shown in terms of semiotic models that the plot can be associated with the re-distribution of power between the supernatural beings and ordinary characters, and may represent several main paradigms of fictional worlds. They manifest types of semantic organization which cannot be understood without the connection between a narrative and its myth/ritual protostructures. Dolezel's theory of fictional worlds contributes to both the structural semantics of literature and the semiotics of ritual.[44]

*From the History of Philosophy toward the Anthropology of Consciousness.* The study of ritual structures within the contexts of modern cultures is impossible without understanding the evolution of the human mind in an anthropological perspective. Ritual consciousness shows up in various ways in the scholarly theories of Fedorov, Dilthey, Bakhtin and Turner. The theories and concepts of these four key figures, who determined the direction of this study, reveal striking interconnections. Some of the connections have already been admitted by researchers. For example, Emerson in her most recent study *The First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin* (1997) mentioned the connection between Dilthey and Bakhtin;[45] the influence of Fedorov on Bakhtin has been acknowledged by a number of scholars (Isupov, Emerson).[46] Turner himself has pointed out the essential significance of Dilthey and his hermeneutics for his anthropology of experience.[47] During his last years, Turner was collecting the works by Bakhtin (recently translated into English) and made Bakhtin's texts required reading for his students in anthropology.[48] The indirect connection between Fedorov and Turner is in their aim and ability to stress the dimensions of ritual consciousness for the modern mind, and to express the paradigms of ritual semiosphere in the language of philosophy. Both thinkers were able to powerfully channel ritual consciousness into modern thought. Thus, the four outstanding scholarly figures appear to be interrelated within the anthropology of consciousness and essential for this study, as well as the tradition of axiological thought and hermeneutics.

Bakhtin's cultural theory, and particularly the concept of the Collective Body, cannot be fully understood without emphasizing the tradition of Russian thought, which can be defined in terms of the ecological or organistic mind. Unlike the philosophical tradition of the West, Russian philosophical tradition (suppressed during Soviet years) has traces of mythological and ritual consciousness. Paradoxically, it also represents a truly contemporary trend, essential for the perspective of the anthropology of consciousness and the developments of the post-postmodern thought. With respect to modern philosophy and cultural theory in their broadest sense, recent publications in the journal *Russian Studies in Philosophy* (1994-96) and the 1995 collection *Bakhtin in Contexts: Across the Disciplines* (especially the pieces on Russian organicism by Emerson and Mandelker) manifest the importance of this cultural perspective. Although one may argue the nineteenth-century original philosophy by Nikolai Fedorov (1829-1903) had influenced Bakhtin, I suggest that rather both thinkers, Fedorov and Bakhtin, as well as another outstanding Russian philosopher Vladimir Vernadsky (1863-1945), with his theory of noosphere—the unity of all alive—had been influenced by the same model (and modality) of consciousness. The same refers to another Russian thinker, Pavel Florensky (1882-1937).[49]

The Russian philosophical tradition of Cosmism and Organicism, to which Fedorov and later Bakhtin belong and are among its most unique and at the same time characteristic representatives, has been developing on the rational level under the visible influence of Western tradition in general (Plato, for example) and German philosophy in particular (Shelling and his naturphilosophy). On the subconscious level, this tradition has some influence of the unexhausted ritual-mythological consciousness of Russian cultural tradition, deeply affecting philosophical thinking. Fedorov's theories were defined as a "mixture of science with religion,"[50] but it would be more appropriate to say "of philosophy with the ritual mind." Still powerful and unexhausted even in nineteenth century (and being widely and deeply carried inside the official culture since the tenth century, when Russian ritual tradition with its established semiosphere was interrupted by a forceful conversion into Christianity), the paradigms and dimensions of the ritual mind have powerfully manifested themselves in Fedorov's teaching. His theory of the reviving of the dead, as strange as it may seem to the modern mind, is impossible to explain in purely philosophical terms outside the realms of ancestor belief, semiotics of ritual and anthropology of consciousness. Fedorov believed that the ultimate solution for all the spiritual problems of the world would be to collect all dead fathers and to revive them, their thoughts, feeling and love for progeny.[51] The boundaries between the ritual, mythological, metaphorical and philosophical are shifted in Fedorov's teaching from the perspective of the modern mind.[52]

This reviving and collecting people (ancestors and progeny) in one powerful spiritual effort, in one all-uniting emotional breath, is also an underlining logic behind another key concept of Russian philosophy—*sobornost'* (collecting/assembling as a spiritual quality and inspiration of the people—the temple of collectively).[53] The latter, with all its uniqueness, can be clarified in the context of semiotic anthropology as a ritual action intended to maintain and emphasize a symbolic community as a central issue of art, religion and culture. Dilthey's hermeneutics, Fedorov's philosophical focus on the ancestral body, *sobornost'* as a main goal for art and culture, as well as Turner's anthropology of experience (which may be said to unite the above mentioned concepts) will be shown as crucial for understanding the meaning of ritual for modern film art and Bakhtin's Collective Body as a protagonist of culture.

*Bakhtin: Crossing All Borders.* As a unique cultural philosopher, Bakhtin naturally integrated ritual concepts into his literary and cultural theories. He crossed all borders simultaneously in the originality and integrity of his teaching: between narratology and philosophy, cultural studies and ritual studies, linguistics and semiotics of culture, anthropology and communication theory, film studies and studies of religion. Bakhtin's methodology not only affected many fields of study, but within some fields Bakhtin's writings originated entirely new areas, such as dialogic anthropology within anthropological theory. The bibliography on Bakhtin and his influence on various areas of study is large; in the words of Emerson, there is a "dialogue on every corner, Bakhtin in every class."[54] Further discussion of the Collective Body concept will show how one among many of Bakhtin's innovative concepts penetrates the boundaries between various disciplines and focuses their methods on a potentially explosive theoretical subject.

Recent works by Western scholars on the methodology of human sciences emphasize new trends, as well as the logical dead-ends of modern thought. This search for new methods speaks to the timeliness of Bakhtin's theoretical discoveries and his poetic logic.[55] Bakhtin's re-conceptualization of cultural theory and semiotics, as well as Turner's revolution in ritual studies (particularly his invention of the processual symbolic analysis and re-discovery of ritual as a transformative process) represent a major shift in the humanities from studies of monologic structures to studies of the dialogically structured processes. They mark the integration of high points of structuralism with poststructuralist thought and can be compared to Einstein's revolution in modern physics. All of these drastic changes in the history of human thought signify a victory of the dialectical and multidimensional over the positivist and monodimensional models of the world.

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[1] The journal *Semiotics* 105 (1/2 1995), for example, focused the whole issue on semiotic anthropology as an advanced "algebra of culture."

[2] My thesis is focused predominantly on Russian cinema, however, selected films that belong to film cultures of other former Soviet peoples will be discussed or mentioned as part of the Soviet cultural landscape.

[3] I rephrase here and reflect upon a recent work—A. Martin, *Screening the Sacred: Religion, Myth and Ideology in Popular American Film* (Boulder, 1995)—on the connection between cinema and religion in North America. It is important to stress, however, that unlike in Martin's work, the whole sphere of religion and religious rituals, is excluded from the present thesis. Soviet cinema and religion represent a separate research topic. On the distinction between ritual and religion, see further in the text.

[4] See, Victor W. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca & London, 1967); *The Drums of Affliction.* (New York and Oxford, 1968); *Structure and Antistructure* (Chicago, 1969); *Revelation and Divination in Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, 1975); *Process, Performance and Pilgrimage: A Study in Comparative Symbology* (New Delhi, 1979); *From Ritual to Theatre* (New York, 1982); *Anthropology of Performance* (New York, 1987); *Blazing the Trial: Way Marks in the Exploration of Symbols* (Tucson & London, 1992); *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* (Ithaca, 1974); Victor Turner and Edith L.B. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (New York, 1978), and Victor W Turner and Edward M. Bruner, eds., *The Anthropology of Experience* (Urbana and Chicago, 1986).

[5] Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture,* 253. It is interesting to note that North American culture, predominantly Protestant, belongs to the opposite trend—iconoclastic religion, as does Judaism. Both religions, for the sake of meditation, tend to keep out images from religious activity, sometimes to the degree of prohibition (a ban on portraying human beings in Judaism). This may explain an unsatisfied need in iconofilic and performative forms of ritual activity in modern North American culture, which finds its manifestation in cinema/media events. The latter is also characteristic of Russia, where any kind of religious activity, including iconofilic and performative modes, had been suppressed for a long time.

[6] See, for example, Neya Zorkaya, *The Illustrated History of the Soviet Cinema* (New York, 1989); Lev Anninsky, *Shestidesiatniki i my: kino kotoroe stalo i ne stalo istoriei* (Hereafter: The Movement of the 1960s and We: the Cinema that Has and Has Not Become a History) (Moscow, 1991); Nicholas Galichenko, *Glasnost—Soviet Cinema Responds* (Austin, 1991); Andrew Horton and Michael Brashinsky, *The Zero Hour: Glasnost and Soviet Film in Transition* (Princeton, 1992); Anna Lawton, ed., *The Red Screen: Politics, Society, Art in Soviet Cinema* (London & New York, 1992); Anna Lawton, *Kinoglasnost: Soviet Cinema in Our Time* (Cambridge, 1993); Attwood, Lynne, ed. *Red Women on the Silver Screen: Soviet Women and Cinema from the Beginning to the End of the Communist Era* (London, 1993), Dmitry

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Shlapentokh and Vladimir Shlapentokh, *Soviet Cinematography 1918-1991* (New York, 1993), and Andrew Horton, *Inside Soviet Film Satire* (Cambridge, 1994)..

[7] See, George E. Marcus and Michael M.J. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (Chicago, 1986).

[8] Marcus and Fischer explain that "Interpretive anthropology is a covering label for a diverse set of reflections upon both the practice of ethnography and the concept of culture. It grew out of... classic Weberian sociology... phenomenology, structuralism, structural and transformative linguistics, semiotics, Frankfurt School critical theory, and hermeneutics." *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*, 25.

[9] Ibid., 74.

[10] See, Umberto Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* (New York & London, 1992).

[11] Marcus and Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique,* 137.

[12] For more on this, see Turner, *The Forest of Symbols,* chapter "Betwixt and Between: the Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*."

[13] For another possible interpretation of the film from a psychoanalytic perspective, see Maxim Shrayer, "Why Cranes are Still Flying?" *The Russian Review* 56 (July 1997): 425-40.

[14] For concepts of Propp's theory—his studies in semiotic anthropology of culture—see Vladimir Propp, *The Morphology of the Folktale* (Austin, 1968), and especially *Istoricheskie korni volshebnoi skazki* (Historical Roots of the Wondertale), (Leningrad, 1946/1986).

[15] The film's transgression of ritual taboos and socio-psychological boundaries caused a birth of newly invented formulas of censorship, and forms of the cultural suppression of meanings. This story of *Whiskers* ' prohibition was told to me by the director himself in 1991, he also discussed it in his later interviews in the United States. By the time Mamin completed the movie, the state system of film distribution disintegrated entirely. In the new economy, a private distribution company came forward offering millions for the full rights on the film. When the contract was signed, the film disappeared. It has never been released for the mass audience and, according to the contact, nobody else has right to show it in the movie theaters. Mamin could not reverse the contract. He hired investigators and they discovered that the distributor, who had offered such a good deal, worked for a new private enterprise, which had emerged from the Komsomol city committee, closely connected to the KGB. In fact, it appeared to be a front company for political manipulators testing ways to deal with the new free media. The author's copy, the only one which belonged to the director himself, was widely shown in filmmakers' professional clubs, American universities and elsewhere, but there has never been a general release on the movie screens of Russia (only recently single screenings were held in the movie theaters of Moscow and St. Petersburg).*Whiskers* has not reached the mass audience, and the film's ideas have lost the opportunity for circulation in the cultural space at a crucial moment of the beginning of the post-Soviet era, hence, it could not affect mass consciousness and political reality. For more on the film *Whiskers* and its place in post-Soviet culture, see my "Besovshchina: bred kak esteticheskaia kategoriia" (Deviltry: Delirium as Aesthetic Category), in *Iskusstvo*

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*Leningrada* 6 (June 1991): 33-39.

[16] Interestingly, Mamin has always used ritual as a focal theme in his grotesque comedies. His first movie, *Neptune Festival* (*Prazdnik Neptuna,* 1986), made before *glasnost,* narrates a story where Soviet bureaucrats, who, to show off the 'superpower' of the Soviet people in front of foreigners, invent a non-existing ritual of winter swimming—Neptune Festival—which, as they claim, Russian people have celebrated for centuries. This lie requires that a whole village has to swim on one of the winter's coldest days (-30 degree). Mamin touched upon the theme of the ongoing 'false rituals' of the Soviet bureaucracy. In *Neptune Festival,* however, the conflict resolves in the comic catharsis of actual mass enthusiasm. A village of previously frightened and apathetic Soviet country people do go swimming against all odds in the icy river, thus, unexpectedly generating a "true" ritual and reviving "community spirit."

[17] Investigation of the films by Tarkovsky in the context of ritual studies, as a continuation of present research, is my next big project which will be incorporated in the future book. For more on *Andrei Rublev,* see the last chapter of the thesis.

[18] Ronald Grimes, *Beginnings in Ritual Studies* (Columbia, 1995), 198.

[19] Ibid. Ronald Grimes, one of the leading experts in the area (the chief editor of the *Journal of Ritual Studies*) should be named among Turner's followers in ritual studies. His systematic studies on ritual, as well as the innovative concept of ritual criticism, mentioned above, represent necessary and stimulating factors for the development of the semiotics of ritual as an integral part of cultural studies. See also Ronald Grimes, *Ritual Criticism: Studies on Its Practice, Essays on Its Theory and Readings, Writing, and Ritualizing* (Columbia, 1989).

[20] In this study of film as ritual, pre-Turnernian notions of ritual will not be discussed: there is an abundance of literature on how the turn from positivism to dialectics from 'repetition' to 'transformation' occurred in the history of ritual theory. In this study, Turner's concept of ritual is a point of reference and a theoretical basis for discussion of the ritual nature of cinema. It should be mentioned that Turner's innovative ideas and methods have not penetrated the walls between the disciplines, and that the drastic developments in the theory of ritual have remained an inner business of anthropology, almost unnoticed outside its boundaries. The majority of scholars, however sophisticated in their own fields, continue to use the concept of ritual in its dated, once-traditional meaning of "repetition." However, understanding ritual in Turner's terms, as a "transformation," a transformative process, opens new dimensions and possibilities for film and cultural theory.

[21] For more detailed discussion of ritual aspects of the films *It* (*Ono,* 1989, by Sergei Ovcharov) and the representation of the Collective Body in this filmtext, see my "Find the Magic Word," in *Re-Entering the Sign: Articulating New Russian Culture,* eds. Ellen Berry and Anesa Miler-Pogasar (Ann Arbor, 1994).

[22] The capital letters are used in the thesis to differentiate Bakhtin's philosophical metaphor of the Collective Body from a similar term accepted in social sciences. For nineteenth and twentieth century

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sociologists and anthropologist, the idea of the collective body implied a functional model of society, in which different people fulfilled different roles—peasant, intellectual, worker, and in taking their part, they become like cells in the organs of the collective body. Thus, in social sciences, the collective body means the integral whole of contemporaries, people of different occupations functioning within a given society. Thanks to Jean DeBernardi and Ronald Grimes for pointing out at this important distinction to me. The two concepts have a similar metaphorical origin, however, Bakhtin's concept represent a poetic logic, rather than a more rational Functionalist approach.

[23] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 27-30.

[24] Ibid., 20.

[25] Thanks to Jean DeBernardi for clarification of this point in the context of comparative analysis of film and ritual.

[26] See Sergei Eisenstein, *Grundproblem,* manuscript (Moscow, TSGALI—a former Soviet "Central State Archive for Art and Literature"). Eisenstein was the first who, as early as in the 1930s, stressed the importance of ritual in the context of film studies. He even signified ritual as the key issue in film studies: *Grundproblem* ("main/great problem" in German) was the title of his manuscript on the anthropology of cinema. *Grundproblem* has never been published and cannot pass the barriers of unofficial censorship to this day. Until the *Thaw*, the 1960's epoch of liberalization, it was strictly prohibited and concealed in the highly restricted department of TSGALI because it departured from and reconsidered the ideological context of Soviet cinema. Only a few researchers were allowed access to Eisenstein's archive and to the particular prohibited manuscript. The first who found the manuscript there and mentioned it in their conference presentations were Soviet film scholars V. Koslov and N. Kleiman. However, only found by a young then semiotician Vyacheslav Ivanov, *Grundproblem* became a basic text for elaborating a new discipline—the semiotic anthropology of cinema. Eisenstein was the first who insisted on the deep connection between cinema and primitive cultures. He extensively investigated the ideas of Frazer (1854-1941), Lévi-Bruhl (1857-1939) and other nineteenth and early twentieth century anthropologists, and used them for his study on the modes of prelogical consciousness and their connection to the mental structures of cinema. But Eisenstein did not limit himself to the methods of Lévi-Bruhl and combined them with the innovative structural analysis, similar to the method of Levi-Strauss, thus making film studies part of modern semiotics. In *Grundproblem* Eisenstein attempted to answer the question, what is the essence of film language, its very core. He concluded that ritual determines expressiveness of film art and its forms of communication. "Regress in form, and progress in content"—was Eisenstein's formula for film art, meaning that new topical content should be expressed via the language and structure of the ritual forms.

[27] See, Vyacheslav Ivanov, *Ocherki po istorii semiotiki v SSSR* (hereafter: Essays in the History of Semiotics in the USSR). In Russian (Moscow, 1976), and *Einfuhrung in allgemeine Probleme der Semiotik.* In German (Darmstadt, 1985). V. Ivanov is currntly working on the new Edition of this book to

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be published in English in the United States. Ivanov worked with *Grundproblem,* along with other unpublished manuscripts by Eisenstein in 1962-67, and his thorough research resulted in the *Essays*—a profoundly dialogic text (in Bakhtin's terms), where true meaning was generated by communication between the two scholars rather than by isolated statements. Ivanov's book reconsidered the image of the great Soviet director, revealing him as an outstanding film semiotician, a forerunner of many semiotic conceptions on the interrelations between signs, texts, ritual, culture and ideology. In his *Essays* Ivanov presented main ideas of Eisenstein's unpublished manuscript, and discussed them in the context of semiotics and anthropology of the 1970s. In his book, dense and extremely rich in ideas, Ivanov developed semiotic-anthropological views on film to the status of a new discipline—the semiotic anthropology of cinema .

[28] See Yvette Biro, *Profane Mythology: the Savage Mind of Cinema* (Bloomington, 1981). The goal of this work, translated from Hungarian into English, was to reveal the powers of myth-making embedded in cinematic structures (especially in totalitarian cultures). This was goal similar to the one fulfilled the same year by Katerina Clark in her book, *Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago, 1981). Biro's study was also a critique of the political-ideological manipulation of cinema but, unlike Clark, she failed to create a new systematic methodology for the myth-ritual study of cinema. The book is written by a scholar with insight and imagination, its main asset is in stressing the enormous potential of film art associated with the unconscious. In its theoretical aspects, *Profane Mythology* is theoretically weaker than the works by Eisenstein-Ivanov, published a few years earlier. Although Biro used some semiotic terminology—"symbol," "signifier," Lotman-Ivanovs' "modelling system"—her methodology was neither structuralist, nor semiotic. She was not a poststructuralist scholar either. Drawing upon such notions as "savage," "profane," "primitive," "archaic," Biro discussed the barbarism of cinema as a kind of modern paganism. She employed a dated theoretical apparatus, referring to the "savage mind of the cinema," almost in prestructuralist Levi-Bruhlian terms. Her terminological apparatus—concepts such as "barbaric metaphor," "the beauty of sin and the sin of beauty," "archaizing natural existence," or "the deep-sea would of consciousness"—point at the influence of neoromanticism and modernist aesthetics of the early New Wave and European poetic cinema. See *Profane Mythology,* 54-85, 101, 107-34. Biro attempted to reveal the "magic" of cinema by underlining its destructive tendencies: she described cinema as a powerful "modern beast" with a "savage mind," which propagated a "profane mythology. Emphasizing dissociative pathos of cinema, Biro ignored the transformative and sacralizing aspects of cinema as a ritual structure. To stress the positive, "conscious" aspects of cinema in the opposition to the negative, "unconscious," Biro used cognitive approach and developed such concepts as "visual thinking," "active nature of seeing" and "film-thought." Her methods of revealing mysteries of "archaic consciousness" in mental structures of cinema lack the dimension of ritual, which could address her concerns better than the cognitive approach. Biro's controversial study of cinema as a form of primitive consciousness failed because of her debatable

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methodology and lack of grounding in semiotics and anthropology. The shortcomings of Biro's book indicate also the limits of a single disciplinary studies approach (film studies, in her case) towards an essentially interdisciplinary issue. Biro's book can be seen as a critique of both—poetic and ideological cinema; it manifested the typical weakness of pre-Turner myth-criticism in cultural studies. However, the positive role of *Profane Mythology* is in its emphasis on the important and poorly studied issue of the connection between film culture and the anthropology of consciousness. For a typical confusion of ritual with expressiveness and image, see, for example, the following quotation from Biro's book: "In what lies film's... process of ritualization?.. in the profane concreteness of abstraction, in the film... the action itself remains, in the strictest sense, naturalistic. Natural existence is realized in direct physical movements and reactions. Instead of stylizing, the film lifts memorable elements out of their usual surroundings, cleanses them, pares them down, and then holds them close to us. Thus we see a hitherto hidden but very expressive face." *Profane Mythology,* 35. Among the constructive ideas by Biro important for the present study are following: "stimulus density,' "film as catalyst, interrogator, and judge," and the interaction of the "city lights—and shadows." *Profane Mythology,* 57, 60, 95. The latter idea anticipates understanding of the ritual role of the shadow in the metalanguage of cinema—to be discussed in the dissertation.

[29] See, Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus" and "The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality" in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader,* ed. Philip Rosen (New York, 1986). For discussions of Baudry's theory, see Noël Carroll, *Mystifying Movies: Fads and Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory* (New York, 1988), Robert Stam, et al, eds., *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics. Structuralism, Post-Structuralism and Beyond* (London and New York, 1992), and Bordwell and Carroll, *Post-theory: Reconstructing Film Studies* (Madison, 1995). First endowed with the status of an almost classical text in film theory and later highly criticized, Baudry's approach has been never tested by the analog of the ritual and cinema. For the scholar in ritual studies, it is difficult to overlook the striking connections between cinematic apparatus, introduced by Baudry, and ritual apparatus. In order to analyze Baudry's theory of apparatus from the perspective of semiotic anthropology, it can be effectively represented as a three-fold system: (1) observation, (2) theorization and (3) conclusion. In short, one may say, that Baudry's observation is revolutionary; his theorization—the logic of his reasoning—is misleading; and the conclusion is insufficient. There is much more to the symbolic meaning of cinema than he determined in his explanations. In his observation, Baudry made an important discovery beneficial for the anthropology of cinema; he claims that the dark cinematic space ultimately symbolizes the *cave*—a symbolic space (of chronotopic nature, as Bakhtin's follower can add), that Baudry derived from the writings by Plato. An anthropologist easily recognizes in the vague symbolic image of the cave that Baudry attempted to rationalize (the metaphor that so impressed film scholars) Turner's famous ritual signifier—his liminal space/time, the "fruitful darkness," the "betwixt and between" ritual zone. Baudry, as well as his readers,

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was himself vividly impressed and fascinated by the mystery of the *cave*, a symbolic image that he offered as a possible root-metaphor for all cinema. In his search for suitable theoretical explanation, Baudry made two mistakes, which later caused a serious and justified critique of his whole theory of apparatus. His primary method was the integration of psychoanalysis with Marxism, but he overestimated their significance in explaining the very nature of cinema. Baudry's overestimation of psychoanalysis is manifest in his theorization of the cave as a place *of/for* (one may add a "model *of/for*") erotic-neurotic nostalgia, a craving for the mother's breasts. (On the Geertz' model *of/for* in respect to film-ritual studies, see further in the text). Carroll, an American film theorist, strongly criticized Baudry for this evidently unjustified Freudian connection. "One must at least question the purported screen/breast association. What is its basis?" See more on Noël Carroll's critique of Baudry in his *Mystifying Movies: Fads & Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory*, 29. If Baudry had turned instead of psychoanalysis to anthropology, he would have found the missing logical link, so important for his explanation of symbolic nature of cinema. He might have met in anthropology the whole semantic chain of identical/interconnected signifiers, extensively discussed in numerous works, such as cave, womb, vagina, tomb, stomach, hollow, cavity, images of devouring and intercourse as a sphere of symbolic death-(re)birth, etc. Baudry's overestimation of ideology is manifest in his interpretation of the *cave* (the dark symbolic space of cinematic experience) as essentially a place of imprisonment, where the cinematic subjects—social prisoners—are shown ideological illusions, manufactured by the ruling class. Thus, the function of cinema is limited by Baudry to that of ideological brainwashing (or, to a ceremony, in Turner's terms). Identifying the cave with a place of restraint and captivity narrows the possible conclusions which brings us to the issue of potential impact of Baudry's theory of apparatus on the development of the semiotic anthropology of cinema. The transformation of the individual in the direction necessary for the community, is the main function of ritual. From this standpoint, Baudry's conclusion that stresses ideological apparatus as the key structure of cinema is accurate. However, there is much more to the cinematic experience than ideological brainwashing. Following Turner, I would like to emphasize that ritual indeed has its own ideology, but it is the ideology of the community (or, of the Collective Body) rather than the ideology of the state or any group in power. Thus, the ideological apparatus, discovered and simultaneously criticized by Baudry, functions properly when the film indeed represents a ceremony. The large area of film-ritual as a transformative performance intended to facilitate the ideology of the Collective Body remains outside Baudry's theory. A conceptualization of the film-ritual will necessarily integrate the controversial connection between ritual and ideology, but cannot be narrowed to it. Baudry, as the majority of film theoreticians, had no intention of taking issue with anthropology: he aimed at the studies of ideology. His own conclusion remained strictly within the study on the ideology of cinema. Nonetheless, if not his conclusions, then his observations on and theorization of the nature of cinematic experience leave space for distinct connections between film theory and anthropology.

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[30] For more on this, see Christopher Innes, *Holy Theater: Ritual and Avant-garde* (New York, 1981), and Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia, 1985).

[31] Perceived by the majority as an eccentric, extravagant modernist theory, the book introduced the notion of theatrical instinct supposedly discovered by Evreinov. What he called "instinct," a performative behavior programmed biologically in human nature, was in fact a tradition of ritual performance. Using substantial materials from the international anthropological and ethnographic sources of early twentieth century to introduce his original theory, Evreinov was not aware that he was describing and discussing ritual paradigms. This early work, yet rather a controversial modernist hypothesis than a strictly academic study, did, however, raise the question of the ritual nature of theatre—something which was discussed later by the leading theatre theoreticians of our century. Soon after N. Evreinov's *Theatrical Instinct,* the first theoretical studies on the ritual roots of theatre (using the materials of Ancient Greek Theatre) were done in the first decades of the twentieth century by the "Cambridge anthropologists," J. Harrison, G. Murray and F. Cornford, scholars who followed J. Frazer. For critique of their thesis, see Richard F. Hardin, "'Ritual' in Recent Criticism: The Elusive Sense of Community," *PMLA,* 98 (5 1983): 846-62, Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory* (London and New York, 1988).

[32] The play *Hudibbuk* (in Hebrew, or *The Dibbuk,* in American version, meaning 'The Spirit') was written by Yiddish folklorist Solomon Z. Rappaport (Annky), and staged by Evgeny Vakhtangov, famous director of the Russian symbolist theatre at Habima, Moscow Jewish theatre. It narrated the story of two young lovers, Leya and Khonnon, who were separated by the will of the girl's rich father. Khonnon, a poor Kabbala student, dies; becoming a spirit, and still unable to separate himself from his beloved Leya, he enters her body. A powerful rabbi later exorcise the dibbuk from Leya's body, but Khonnon reappears to the girl in spiritual form. The play was intended to show the power of love and human spirit. Habima left Russia in the late 1920s to travel around the world with its one and only unique and famous performance; it was acknowledged as an outstanding theatre achievement by critics all over the world. Performed in ancient Hebrew (a ritual language of Torah comprehensible for a few), *Hudibbuk* drew upon a coded speech and reinforced a powerful non-verbal communication—the signification of rhythm, light, movement, as well as other forms of energy transmission. The theatrical chronotope (organization of time/space) was focused on the-creation of the ritual circle as an epicenter of scenic magic. In this, *Hudibbuk* became a truly symbolic performance—metaritual, manifesting theater's meditation on and re-creation of its very cultural origin. Like an authentic ritual, performed again and again, it effectively fulfilled the transformative spiritual function. The mysterious and enchanting *Hudibbuk,* presented by the Jewish theater group from Russia in the 1930s in Europe and North America, was received as an outstanding achievement by critics all over the world. The success of the theater experiment, which emphasized ritual communication in modern culture facilitated interest of theorists and directors in Russia and abroad in the ritual nature of modern performance. It is interesting, that *Hudibbuk,* as a true 'ritual', has been remade around the globe—hundreds of

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performances intended to re-create the "magic" of the first performance. It became the most frequently performed drama of the Yiddish theatre; Leonard Bernstein wrote a ballet on its plot; George Gershwin started to write an opera and one version was performed in La Scala; recently a new opera, *Between the Two Worlds* was staged in Lyric Opera of Chicago. Its director R. Pearlman stresses, in somewhat humorous way, *Hudibbuk*'s truly inter- and metatextual dimensions: "This is *Romeo and Juliet* crossed with *Tristan and Isolde,* and you get *The Exorcist* for your money, too." F.N. D'Alessio, "Opera Uses Yiddish Tale," *Toronto Star,* 12 July, 1997, M5. The Jewish legend of the dibbuk is rooted in the ritual motif of the marriage between the dead and the living man/woman, wide-spread in many cultural mythologies. With all metatextuality of the latest motifs derived from this ritual paradigm, the story touches upon the essential issues of the Collective Body. I studied ritual elements in Habima and GOSSET, two famous Moscow Jewish theaters as a visiting researcher at the University of Jerusalem in 1991-92. On the significance of the play *The Dibbuk* in the twentieth-century cinema and culture, see also Ira Koninsberg "The Only 'I' in the World": Religion, Psychoanalysis, and *The Dibbuk*," in *Cinema Journal* 36, no. 4 ( Summer 1997), 22-43.

[33] In Artaud's view the theater must disturb the spectator profoundly, pierce him to the heart and soul in such a way as to free unconscious repressions and oblige men to view themselves as they really are. In it, mime, gesture and scenery are more important than words, and the director is a kind of maker of magic, a "master of sacred ceremonies." Following Artaud, the Spanish-born dramatist Fernando Arrabal invented in the 1962 the term "theatre of panic"—something that can be understood as dramatic structure which plays upon and reinforces a cathartic need. This model was designed to restore a ritual mode of theatre and create a kind of ritualistic drama which combines elements of tragedy and buffoonery with a religious-type experience. See, J.A. Cuddon, *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (London, 1992), 966.

[34] For more on Grotowski's experiments in ritual performance, see for example, in Grimes, *Ritual Criticism.* My own experience as a spectator with Grotowski's ritual theatre took place in Russia, during a performance by Grotowski's actors at the Leningrad State Institute of Theatre, Music and Cinematography in 1976. This was indeed one of the most striking and memorable aesthetic and psychological experiences in my professional career, and something that has influenced my interest in the ritual forms of modern art a great deal.

[35] See numerous works by Richard Schechner: *Between Theatre and Anthropology* (Philadelphia, 1985), *Performance Theory* (London & New York, 1988), *By Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual* (New York, 1990), *The Future of Ritual: Writings on Culture and Performance* (New York, 1993) and Introduction in Victor W. Turner, *Anthropology of Performance.* In all his books Schechner emphasizes the connections between ritual and theatre, and the ritual aspects of modern performance, as well as general importance of anthropology for performance theory and theatre studies. According to Schechner: "Human creativity still works this playfield betwixt and between the ethological,

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the neurological, and the social. The future of ritual is the continued encounter between imagination and memory translated into doable acts of the body. Ritual's conservatism may restrain humans enough to prevent our extinction, while its magmatic creative core demands that human life—social, individual, maybe even biological—keep changing. *The Future of Ritual,* 263.

[36] There were two reasons for this integration of semiotics with anthropology. First, Russian academic tradition has been inclined to interdisciplinary studies (Bakhtin, Propp, Freidenberg, etc.). Second, social anthropology and ritual studies, as its integral part, especially their theoretical and comparative aspects, had no chance for development within official Soviet science. Semiotics became a form of academic "secret language," in the terms of Ivanov, inaccessible to the ideological authorities and a logical context for the developments in anthropology (comparative aspects of religion, social sciences and cultural studies had been "not recommended" before the revolution and were prohibited after the revolution), which eventually took the form of the semiotic anthropology of the Moscow-Tartu school. Many works by the founders, Lotman and Ivanov, as well as other authors in the periodical *Tartusskie sborniki* (Tartu Collections) investigated symbols and meanings in Russian culture within the context of myth and ritual, representing a systematic semiotic-anthropological approach towards various cultural phenomena.

[37] Following Eliade, Frye and Turner, Clark in her new approach toward Soviet culture emphasized the ideological symbolism of Stalinist literature of socialist realism as a system based on ritual structures. A renowned specialist on Bakhtin and Soviet literature, Clark was the first to cross the borders between traditional studies of Russian literature and anthropology, forming in the West the basis for the entirely new discipline—the anthropology of Russian culture. The main idea of Clark's book focused on the ritual reinterpretation of socialist realism. "The prominence given to the life-cycle and the cycles of nature in these essentially political dramas imparts to Soviet order a spurious aura of organicity and sense of continuity with past traditions. When, in a given novel, the balance of nature is restored, then, at a symbolic level, the ideological balance is restored, with all contradictions resolved. The organization of the typical Stalinist novel fits the schema in Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* so well that the novel almost seems made to his order." Clark, *The Soviet Novel,* 113.

[38] On Soviet cinema of the 1930s in the tradition initiated by Clark, see Hanse Günther, "Big Family," *Iskusstvo kino,* April (4, 1996): 103-108.

[39] Ritualism of the Cambridge school facilitated the discovery of the cyclic model of the mythological idea of time, and rise a question on the correlation between the myth and ritual in culture. More on the conception of myth in Cambridge school and New Criticism, see, for example, Richard P. Sugg, ed. *Jungian Literary Criticism* (Ewanston, IL., 1992) and E.M. Meletinsky, *Poetika mifa* (The Poetics of Myth) (Moscow, 1976).

[40] Besides Northrop Frye, scholars of this directions include M. Bodkin, *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies in Imagination* (New York, 1934), J.L. White, *Mythology in the Modern Novel. A*

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*Study of Prefigurative Techniques* (Princeton, 1971), R. Chase, *The Quest for Myth* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1949), etc. For a comparative analysis of the ideas by Frye and Bakhtin, see D. Hayman, "Audela de Bakhtine" *Poetique* 13 (1973) and E.M. Meletinsky, *Poetics of Myth* (The Poetics of Myth). (Moscow, 1976).

[41] Freidenberg, as an important theorist and predecessor of structuralism, was recently introduced to Western scholarship by V. Ivanov. See, Olga Freidenberg, *Image and Concept: Mythopoetic Roots of Literature,* ed. Vyacheslav Ivanov (Los Angeles, 1996), as well as Ivanov's Introduction to *Image and Concept.* In this book written in the 1930s, Freidenberg explored Greek tragedy and its influence on the very formation of world literature. She develops the idea that the appearance of literature came with its transition from mythological thinking to formal-logical concepts. Inherited mythological forms were reinterpreted conceptually—causalized, ethicized, generalized and abstracted. This reinterpretation brought about poetic figurality. Folklore material began to be differentiated from mythological images of the past into the various disciplines of religion, philosophy, ethics, literature and art. Yet, differentiated and reinterpreted as it was, the folklore material remained formally preserved in poetic image, structure and plot.

[42] Only two chapters of this book have been so far translated and published in Vladimir Propp, *Theory and History of Folklore* (Minneapolis, 1984).

[43] Unlike the narrative system frozen in a segment of time (Propp's morphology), his anthropology of the fairy tale explored main plots of the world's fairy tales as protostructures of modern narrative systems in their relationship to rituals, which originated them. In this he followed A.N. Veselovsky's method of historical poetics. The focus of *Historical Roots* is on the ritual origin of narrative paradigms and well-known motifs. Each of the plot was shown by Propp as a result of ritual needs and ritual processes within archaic societies. Propp's methodology will be extensively used in this study. Propp's idea that the tale (story) can reinterpret the origin of ritual opens new opportunities for ritual studies and criticism. Not only does a modern plot reflect an archetypal metaplot, but within its narrative rhetoric a modern (film)story makes a statement about contemporary social dramas and ritual ways of addressing them; ritual thus becomes a mode of cultural philosophy. This aspect is significant because it treats ritual as a sphere of open discussion on topical cultural matters.

[44] See, for example, Lubomir Dolezel, "Kafka's Fictional World" in *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* (March, 1984): 61-83.

[45] *Caryl Emerson, The First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin* (Princeton, 1997), 62.

[46] Ibid., 255, 259. See there also Emerson's discussion of K.G.Isupov's interpretation of Bakhtin in the context of the Russian thought.

[47] Victor W. Turner and M. Bruner, eds., *The Anthropology of Experience* (Urbana, 1986).

[48] I thank Ken Little, a former doctoral student of Turner, and currently professor of anthropology at York University for bringing to my attention Turner's profound interest in Bakhtin during his work at the

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University of Virginia. Although we can hardly speak of the direct influence of Bakhtin on Turner, since the main theories of Turner had been already established by this time, in the context of the dialogue between the two scholars it is important to realize that Turner perceived Bakhtin's theories as a significant addition to his own.

[49] In his essay "Macrocosm and Microcosm," Florensky explored a symbolic image "The World as a Big Man" as one of the most widespread mythologemes of all cultures and all times." Florensky constructs a theory very similar to Bakhtin's Collective Body, and directly referred to the beliefs of ancient Slavs and other world cultures. "Biologically—everything surrounding us, is our body, the continuation of our body, the integrity of our complementary organs... Both nature, and a man are endless; and in their infinity they are equal... may become parts of one another, and the equally powerful parts are mutually interchangeable with each other, and with the whole world," Pavel Florensky, *Opravdanie kosmosa* (Justification of Cosmos) (St.-Petersburg, 1994), 184. See more on Florensky's philosophy in this recently published collection of his works.

[50] S.G. Semenova, Introduction to Nikolai Fedorovich Fedorov, *Sochineniia* [Works] (Moscow,1994), 6.

[51] According to Fedorov's philosophy of religion, "ancient religion [tribal religion, ancestor belief] is the *sobornoe* [from *sobornost'*—the collecting] revolt of the sons against heaven, caused by the death of their fathers. Ancient religion is also an action, liturgy, i.e. recreation of the fathers in the forms of monuments and memorials, the totality of which is The Temple." Nikolai Fedorov, *Sochineniia,* 24.

[52] Discussing the connection between Fedorov and Bakhtin, it is interesting to mention that Fedorov deliberates on the issue of *philologicheskaia piatidesiatnitsa* [fifty languages in one], later defined by Bakhtin as heteroglosia, and also on the issues which can now be interpreted in the context of metalanguage and semiotics: "*Iazychniki* [pagans, from Russian *iazyk*—tongue] were called those tribes who... have lost their connection in language (i.e. forgot their kinship ties, their common origin), and thus lost any ability to understand each other... [Humankind] has to create a language common and clear to all people, to all nations, and thus to destroy an obstacle for mutual understanding." Fedorov stresses the need for one symbolic language—the metalanguage of understanding: "Until there is no unity in the world, people will remain brothers who cannot talk to each other." Fedorov, *Sochineniia,* 33, 36, 37.

[53] The word *sobornost'* originates from Russian *sobirat'* (to collect, to gather); notably that the Russian word 'temple'—*sobor*— is profoundly interconnected with both above mentioned notions.

[54] Caryl Emerson, "Introduction: Dialogue on Every Corner, Bakhtin in Every Class," in *Bakhtin in Contexts: Across the Disciplines,* ed. Amy Mandelker (Evantson, IL.: 1995). *Bakhtin in Contexts* is particularly important for understanding Bakhtin's influence on interdisciplinary studies. On Bakhtin's influence on the field of anthropology, see Vincent Crapanzano, "The Postmodern Crisis: Discourse, Parody, Memory," the chapter "Anthropology" in the above mentioned collection.

[55] On reconsideration of the logic in contemporary scholarship and the development of poetic logic vs.

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strictly rational reasoning, see for example, the publications by Canadian philosophers Beiner, Walton, Colilli and Waldes should be mentioned. Beiner points to the urgent contemporary need to reconsider the interrelationship of the individual with the whole. He recognizes that the antidote of our spiritless time lies neither in the embrace of community with over individualism nor of the individual over the community: both should be submitted to a radical questioning. The Collective Body-theory is a possible way of provocative philosophical thinking intended to stimulate radical questioning. See Ronald Beiner, ed. *Philosophy in a Time of Lost Spirit* (Toronto, 1997). In accordance with Bakhtin, Walton points to the "idealized and abstract models" in logic and demonstrates that an argument can best be evaluated in terms of the goals of a particular dialogue. Douglas Walton, *The New Dialectic: Conversational Contexts in Argument* (Toronto, 1997). Valdés emphasizes the "imaginative configuration of the world, the cultural phenomenon of making sense, poetic sense, of life." Mario Valdés, *The Hermeneutics of Poetic Sense* (Toronto, 1997); see also his earlier *Shadows in the Cave* (1982). Colilli brings a unifying perspective to the time-worn debate between rationalists and empiricists by demonstrating that ratiological thinking is based on, and not separate from, poetico-logical thinking. Colilli sets his theory of poetic logic through an analysis of works by a range of thinkers and writers that include Heidegger, Jung, Vico and Giordano Bruno. Bakhtin, undoubtedly, should be added to this list. Colilli argues that their writing offer a strong argument to the mechanic and materialistic perspective of postmodern science and philosophy. Through his expansive interpretive approach, Colilli is able to re-establish a unity that once existed between poetry and philosophy, and between the lyric and the rational. Paul Colilli, *The Idea of a Living Spirit: Poetic Logic as a Contemporary Theory* (Toronto, 1997).

# Part I. Paradigms of Theory

The first theoretical part of the dissertation focuses on the legitimacy of the semiotic anthropology of cinema and its perspectives. It discusses the main parameters and methods in the study of film as ritual. On the basis of diverse paradigms developed by anthropologists and cultural philosophers, Bakhtin and Turner in particular, with the materials from various cultures, this part will emphasize the connection between the semiotics of ritual and film studies, as well as the importance of selected models and patterns for the development of the anthropological perspective on cinema.

**Definitions of Ritual.** Ritual has been analyzed, from Emile Durkheim to Victor Turner, as a means of converting the obligatory norms of society into the desires of the individual, of creating socialized sentiments, of transforming statuses, effecting cures, acting out mythic charters for social action and reintegrating agonistic social groups.[1] Almost always, as Marcus and Fischer point out, ritual has been seen as a "relatively self-contained dramatic frame."[2] Turner emphasized that the unity of ritual is a dramatic unity. He introduced the understanding of ritual as "prescribed formal behavior for occasions not given over to technological routine, having reference to beliefs in mystical beings or powers."[3] Grimes, following Turner, described ritual as a "transformative performance revealing major classifications, categories, and contradictions of cultural processes."[4] Turner also made an extremely important distinction between ritual and ceremony. He restricted the term *ritual* to the classes of behavior which accompany social transitions, and used *ceremony* to denote behaviors which serve to confirm a social status and a status of power. Ritual "is not a bastion of social conservatism whose symbols merely condense cherished cultural values. Rather it holds the generating source of culture and structure... Hence, ritual is by definition associated with social transitions, while ceremony is linked with social states."[5] Turner's innovative method of processual symbolic analysis refers to the interpretation of ritual symbols which operate as a dynamic system of signifiers in the context of sociocultural processes.[6] Among other theoreticians of ritual Rene Girard should be mentioned. He regards ritual primarily as a re-direction of violence, which is important for the catharsis theory and ritual roots of tragedy.[7]

**Ritual as Metastructure.** The thesis contains references to cultural and ritual symbolism of diverse ethnographic origins—predominantly Russian, and that of other peoples of the former Soviet Union, as well as African (particularly of the Ndembu people) studied by Turner. The first part of this chapter discusses dominant ritual symbols of European (French) culture, as investigated by Bakhtin; the second largely draws upon the works by Turner and other Western anthropologists who created their conceptions of ritual on the basis of materials from various cultures. A legitimate question may be asked—what are the grounds or principles for such comparative study? How is a comparative analysis of such distant ethnographies possible, and how can conclusions be drawn on its basis? This set of questions has been addressed by Turner himself in one of his latest works, in which he completed and promoted a metastructural approach towards ritual symbolism.

In the chapter devoted to the controversy of metaritual, "African Ritual and Western Literature: Is a Comparative Symbology Possible?", Turner focused attention on the possibility of creating a code of ritual applicable to different cultures. He stressed that the difference between Ndembu and European dominant symbols is not in their semantic structure but in the oral versus written traditions in which they are embedded.[8] The same semantic structure is manifest in ritual forms in one case and in the narrative/performative tradition in another; therefore, it can be translated from one cultural language into another on the basis of ritual paradigms—the unifying ritual semantics. Turner argues that it is through their dominant symbols (and iconic signs), which constitute the molecules of both African ritual and European literature, that the action genres of African ritual and the written texts of Western literature may be compared:

> Dominant symbols provide the fixed points in the total systems, ritual or literary. They designate the major themes of the culture for which they are supreme modes of expression. Sometimes they also embody critiques of those principles and values, or enunciate new unprecedented themes. Analysis of dominant symbols and the clusters of ancillary symbols which they organize is perhaps the best way to reveal differences in the implicit postulates of dynamical cultural systems. It raises questions which determine the shape and style of further, broader-gauged comparative research.[9]

Rephrasing Turner, we may ask—is a comparative symbology of African ritual and Soviet cinema possible? From this standpoint, the following chapter is intended to outline and discuss the key paradigms of ritual theory which are essential for semiotic anthropology of cinema in general and for the present study of Soviet films in particular. This research is based on the idea that ritual is a paradigmatic structure that facilitates transformative cultural processes essential for any society, rather than an obsolete form of cultural activity, characteristic only for the indigenous people. Ritual is employed as a "theoretical synthesis," a metaparadigm rather than a belief in the supernatural, or a typologically accurate description of a particular group or ethnic activity. In this context, Turner's definition of ritual as "the basic building blocks of culture" is essential for an understanding of the important (ritual) elements lacking within modern societies. Ritual is discussed in the dissertation as a semantic system, a formalized metalanguage that represents paradigms of change in the semantic field. Aspects of the ritual language, therefore, will further be considered, according to Turner, as a dynamic system of signifiers, agents in the transformative metasemantic processes. The exploration of ritual as a metalanguage and a metastructure would be centered around two interrelated questions—who or what is the subject/protagonist of the ritual action, and what is the essence of this action? These issues, as well as other correlated questions, will be addressed in the chapters 1 and 2: "The Subject of Ritual: *The Collective Body*" and "The Semiotics of Ritual: The Ritual Action." Part I will be completed with chapter 3 "From Ritual to Film: Towards the Semiotic Anthropology of Cinema."

# Chapter 1. The Subject of Ritual: *The Collective Body*

This chapter will introduce and explore the concept of the Collective Body, which Bakhtin outlined, and will show its focal point in the philosophy of culture and its significance as a collective protagonist for the semiotic anthropology of cinema.[10] The Collective Body represents a necessary theoretical link between the interdisciplinary areas of the present research. It is discussed in the dissertation as a necessary centering and intermediate concept between Soviet studies and film studies, the semiotics of ritual and the anthropology of cinema. Without the Collective Body concept, the integration of the above mentioned disciplines would be difficult. This chapter presents an analysis of the Collective Body concept in culturological perspective, while the following chapters will develop the discussion of the Collective Body as multiple protagonist in ritual and cinema. The representation of the Collective Body image as a collective protagonist in selected Soviet films will be the subject of the second part of the dissertation. Introduced in the capacity of a dominant cultural symbol, the Collective Body will further be discussed as a dynamic system of signifiers using the materials from Soviet films.

***The Ancestral—The Collective—The Birth-Giving Body.*** This chapter will discuss one of the most intriguing and poorly studied concepts in Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of culture—*rodovoe telo.*[11] This concept appears to be the most enlightening with respect to issues of the subject or protagonist of ritual, and the integral identity in Bakhtin's semiotics and cultural philosophy. In spite of the overwhelming recent interest in the works by Bakhtin (1895-1975)—the so-called Bakhtin industry in the West—this particular concept has been overlooked and its translation misinterpreted in both Western and Soviet scholarship.[12] However, its significance is of such importance for all branches of cultural studies, that its discussion should not be delayed any longer. The misinterpretation started by the translator, but the translator is not to blame, since she, Hélène Iswolsky, is just a messenger. It is not merely an issue of correct linguistic translation, but rather an issue of cultural misrepresentation, which is a topical problem in the disciplines of the semiotics of culture and semiotic anthropology—an issue of 'cultural understanding' (translating from one cultural system into other).[13] There are serious and deep-rooted reasons for misinterpreting and underestimating this concept in both Bakhtin's own twentieth-century Russian culture and in the West. My goal is: a) to raise the issue of this misinterpretation; b) to define this confusing concept and to show its cultural and philosophical origins; c) to explain the underlying logic of its misinterpretation—why Bakhtin's concept has not and would not have been understood; and d) by using the materials from Soviet cinema, to explain the value of this concept as a dynamic system of signifiers in culture and a powerful theoretical tool for contemporary scholarship, for cultural critique, for film/media/literary and ritual studies, popular culture and general culturology.[14] In this chapter I shall focus on two issues: misinterpretation of the concept and its significance for the theory of culture.

Before discussing various possible translations of the concept *rodovoe telo* into English, I should stress that there is no such expression in the Russian language. This expression and the corresponding concept were created by Bakhtin for his own theoretical purposes. If a philosopher has to create a new word, it is easy to assume that no natural notion exists in the culture for a particular meaning. Bakhtin not only had to create a new word, but, by doing so, he intended to fill a particular gap in the established system of meanings. The Bakhtinian concept under discussion and its significance may be referred to without exaggeration as a missing link in the self-identity of modern cultures/societies.

From the etymological perspective, the adjective *rodovoe* is generated in Russian by the noun *rod*, which means 'origin, genus, family, kin, clan' and 'gender.' Before Bakhtin created his own meaning, the adjective *rodovoe* had been used purely in the historical context of social anthropology as 'tribal, ancestral': *rodovoe obshchestvo* (tribal society), or *rodovye otnosheniya* (tribal relations). The word *rodovoe* can also mean 'hereditary': *rodovoe nasledstvo* (family inheritance), *rodovoe pomest'e* (hereditary estate). The plural of *rod*, *rody,* carries in Russian another essential cultural notion: *rody* means 'birth, delivery, labor'. The verb *rodit'* means 'to bear, to give birth to, to give rise to, to generate'. In the context of giving birth, the adjective *rodovoe*, or in plural *rodovye,* obtains another meaning—that of 'labor'. *Rodovye skhvatki* means 'labor pains', and it is another significant context for the word *rodovoe* in Russian. But unlike the close *rodiashchee telo* (birth-giving body), which has a usual monosemantic and literal meaning, a new expression *rodovoe telo* sounds symbolic; Bakhtin has given it a metaphorical and philosophical signification.[15]

Bakhtin, in his own tradition of grotesque and heteroglossia, united the two heterogeneous, although interconnected, meanings in the Russian language, and put them in his theory of popular culture in a dialogical relationship. He gave birth to an innovative concept, and to a rather grotesque image. Bakhtin's philosophical metaphor *rodovoe telo* represents simultaneously a collective **body of kinship** and a **birth giving body**—a giant immortal body of kinship (in the symbolic sense of community), which generate a new life. Bakhtin's interrelated concept, the *grotesque body,* expresses essential dimensions of the life-generating body, in which birth begins where death ends; the metamorphosis of the old into the new is an eternal mode of the Collective Body's self-transformation. The philosopher emphasized the importance of this phenomenon throughout the history of culture. His concept of the Collective Body reaches beyond carnival or popular culture, becoming an important issue in general cultural theory. The polysemantics of this concept and its enigmatic transformative quality stress the procreative and creative potential and vital energy of the Collective Body. The mythological power of this very notion manifests it as the origin of all the origins, as the origin and reason of mankind. And according to Bakhtin's philosophical anthropology (as he defined his own theory), *rodovoe telo* is not just a generating force of humankind, but is also *rodovoe telo kul'tury*—a "birth giving body of culture." It gives special meaning to every story, every action, every individual life within the history of culture as a mode of orientation toward the Collective Body—our common biological and spiritual unity. It should be perceived as the collective author and the protagonist of all culture, a *metaprotagonist* of cultural evolution.

The translator of Bakhtin's book on popular culture, *Rabelais and His World,* Hélène Iswolsky interpreted *rodovoe telo* as 'ancestral body.' This translation reflects the meaning of *rodovoe telo,* but only one of its various aspects, and therefore loses the rest, as well as the very polysemantics and innovative multidimensional quality of Bakhtin's new cultural concept. "Ancestral body" reduces this notion to the bodies of dead ancestors, leaving contemporaries, as well as future generations, outside of the union. However, Bakhtin's concept paradoxically unites *ALL the bodies* in time: those who lived, those of the living, and those to come. This notion contains at least a two-dimensional unity of space and time: the horizontal, that of all the contemporaries belonging to one particular culture, and the vertical, that of the past, present and future generations. The Collective Body is also a general, communal, universal body, or the *body of all*, the collective body as a biological universe. *Rodovoe telo* may also be translated as the Filial Body, the Hereditary Body, or the Genus Body—The Collective Body of Genus.[16]

There is an uninterrupted continuation of life expressed in the corporeal reality of human bodies, deeply connected with the past and with the future and, what is especially significant—fertile and fruitful—capable of providing lives for the generations to come. *Rodovoe telo* can be sufficiently translated into English only by the above mentioned **combination of notions** and rather paradoxical meanings: there is no one word in English, as well as in Russian, to adequately translate Bakhtin's innovative philosophical concept. *Rodovoe telo* unites all the living in the modes of past, present and future; and it unites not only their ideas, souls and memories, but their corporeality, their flesh and blood being, their fragile tangible, sensible existence. However, *rodovoe telo* is not only a mere union—it is a creative and procreative union, a fertile one, a union capable of giving birth to healthy and, therefore, also fertile generations. *Rodovoe telo* is the basis for life continuation in its material physical and also ideal metaphysical dimensions. These are the most essential features of the *rodovoe telo*.

The most suitable translation into English would combine the following concepts: ***the ancestral—the collective—the birth-giving body.*** These notions emphasize the connection between generations, the unity-factor and the capability to create and procreate.[17] Emphasizing and keeping in mind that only all these concepts together can approach the meaning of Bakhtin's concept, I will further refer in the text to *rodovoe telo* as the Collective Body or the Collective Body of Genus.

The choice of one term, Collective Body, as a translation of *rodovoe telo* in this dissertation does not mean that I am settling on one meaning on the expense of others.[18] I must strongly emphasize the polysemantic meaning of *rodovoe telo,* which embraces and symbolizes all the above mentioned translations. I chose the Collective Body as a conditional term to be used throughout the text to represent Bakhtin's multiple meanings for one particular reason: the main social function of ritual, which will be discussed as a function of *rodovoe telo,* is to collect, to integrate, to assemble, to bring together. The Collective Body it is essentially the **Collecting Body**; and the term has been chosen to emphasize the connection with the verb/action 'to collect' (*sobirat'*), which is also a basis for the concept of *sobornost'. Rodovoe telo* is the unity of the bodies and souls coming together: it is *sobiratel'noe* (collected) and *sobiraiushchee* (collecting), and in a sense, *sobornoe telo* (body-temple)—the **Integral** and **Integrating Body—A Body in (ritual) Action**. This particular function and activity of *rodovoe telo*—integration of the symbolic community—will be explored throughout the dissertation from its theoretical element to discourse analysis, from *Commissar* to *Andrei Roublev.*

The concept of the Collective Body is never fully theorized by Bakhtin and is presented in his writings in a few sentences, as an intellectual model, a text-code to be projected and elaborated—a concept yet to be unfolded, which as a contracted spring possesses enormous content and potential energy. However, it stimulates and determines the whole body of his cultural theory and may be considered the pivotal point in his entire philosophical system. The theory of the Collective Body exists in his book on

Rabelais in a latent form. It is hidden within the theories of grotesque and carnival and projected through the theorizing of the grotesque and carnival bodies, polyphony, heteroglossia, etc. The Collective Body would most probably have been Bakhtin's next theoretical agenda, as a system of meanings calling for further development.

Even in his brief references to the Collective Body issues in the book on Rabelais and popular culture, Bakhtin several times stressed its focal place in his theory of culture. A visual symbol, or more exactly, an emblem of the Collective Body is described by Bakhtin in his book on the carnival, where he emphasized the significance and symbolic meaning of the "figure, portraying a man's body with two heads facing one another, four arms, four feet, a pare of arses and a brace of sexual organs, male and female. Such, according to Plato's Symposium, writes Bakhtin, was human nature in its mystical origins."[19] Thus, the Collective Body concept was designed to unfold the mystical origins of human nature and the mystical driving forces of the development and survival of the human race's body. In Rabelais' *Third Book*, writes Bakhtin "there is an explanation of why newly married men are not forced to go to war."[20] Here "the theme of the collective body (or, "ancestral theory," in Iswolsky's translation) is developed. This is one of the leading themes of the theoretical conceptualization/philosophy of the entire book"—by Rabelais, as Bakhtin stresses. And of the book by Bakhtin himself, one can add here.[21] Writing, as it seems, about Rabelais, Bakhtin in fact describes his own ideas and discoveries, revealing a type of author-hero identification and self-projection that takes place not only in the fiction, but also in literary/cultural critique and scholarship to be discussed in the following chapters. As often happens, an author/scholar expresses his own ideas through the thoughts of his hero. In Bakhtin's text one reads: "Rabelais not only represents the grotesque image of the body in its essential forms. He also offers the theory of the body in its ancestral aspects," as translated by Izwolsky, or "*teoriiu tela v rodovykh aspektakh*" (theory of the body in the dimensions of kinship) in Bakhtin's original text.[22] Thus, the following definitions in the following paragraph maybe referred to as self-explanatory on the part of Bakhtin.

By 'replacing' the name of protagonist—Rabelais with the name of the author Bakhtin (one can see how the author and the hero are identified in one mutual theoretical effort), and by changing the term 'ancestral' to the term 'collective,' we get the following statement: "Bakhtin (Rabelais) not only represents the grotesque image of the body in its essential forms. He also offers the theory of the collective-ancestral body (the aspects of *rodovoe telo*)."[23] In the words of Bakhtin, "Panurge also develops the theory of the ancestral/collective body [*rodovogo tela*]." However, it was not just Panurge or even Rabelais, but Bakhtin himself via his "heroes"—Rabelais and Panurge (an interesting metastructural composition or a matrix identity of a theorizing "author—within-the-author—within-the-author"): "The interdependent universe was so beautifully organized ["so kind", in Bakhtin's original text], that the problem of nutrition was perfected, it went on to lend to those unborn—a loan, by means of which it sought to perpetuate and multiply itself in its own image: children." This little example shows that the warm, bodily, motherly image of the Collective Body's universe, which is 'kind', in Bakhtin's own words, to the beings it generates/creates—"creatures", was changed by the translator into the societal image of organization and structure.

I think that Bakhtin's own translations (from French into Russian) of the quotations from Rabelais that he uses, his own selection of words and, therefore, his interpretation of meanings are important to clarify his theoretical position. Children are not merely the reflections of one's image (as in Iswolsky's translation), but warm and autonomous, flesh and blood beings, living things, organisms (creatures)—parts of one giant organism of the Collective Body, a mode of one's material (corporeal, physical) immortality. It is not an "image" of the Collective Body what is being multiplied in the progeny, but rather a material substance of life, of the Collective Body's integral identity and its corporeal immortality through the "similar creatures—children." The "little creatures—children" are changed into "reflections," an almost Baudrillardian simulacrum-image: the translation thus becomes an interpretation. It transfers the sense of Bakhtin's philosophy not only from one language into another, but from one system of meanings into another—in this case a postmodern one, where the Collective Body indeed could not find a place within, as it is truly incompatible, alternative to the postmodern semiosphere.

In the context of the Collective Body theory, it is important to note the loss of meaning and loss of emphasis that has happened already in the translation of the title in English. It was vital for Bakhtin to consider Rabelais's creations not as an autonomous literary work, but rather a modeling system, a manifestation of a larger cultural system—a popular or folk tradition, which carries within itself a notion of the Collective Body as its essential part and is associated with the Collective Body notion on its deepest level. Bakhtin's original title in Russian stresses the mode of creation: *Creations by François Rabelais and Folk Culture of the Middle Ages and Renaissance.* In English it became *Rabelais and His World.* It is easy to see that Bakhtin's title signifies two protagonists, while the title in translation has only one. At least one of the protagonists, stated by Bakhtin in the title as important, appeared lost, or at very least, underestimated in the American edition. Omitting 'creations' and 'folk culture' (both stress the Collective Body-concept and its creative mode) as early as in the book's title indicated and anticipated the initial narrowing of the book's content. Moreover, *tvorchestvo* in Russian is wider than just "writer's creative works"; it means also *creation* in a philosophical and highly metaphorical sense. *Narodnaia kultura* in Russian is a stronger definition than a folk culture in English: it embraces more than just popular culture. It is essentially people's culture, sacred culture, the culture of all, appealing to and communicating with the community as a whole on the deepest psychological levels. Bakhtin's original title—the self-definition of his theory—has cultural connotations with the archetypal mode of culture and emphasizes its very roots. Meanings chosen by Bakhtin as the designated key words "creation" (essential for my dissertation in the context of further discussion of ritual) and "folk, people," are essential for the exploration of the Collective Body. They have been dismissed/lost in the translation already on the initial stage of the readers' encounter with the book's title page. Whenever the notions of *rodovoe telo* emerge in Bakhtin's original text (or any of the related concepts: the Collective Body theme, the Collective Body aspects, the grotesque bodily element), Iswolsky changes them into "ancestral" body/theme/theory, thus referring these notions to the far past. The whole interrelated family of terms, which compose Bakhtin's essential paradigm—the one which carries the potency of unfolding into a new theoretical universe—was lost.[24]

In the above mentioned pieces of Bakhtin's text, Iswolsky not only omits his own emphasis in the font, but also shortens his long sentences, typical for academic Russian. Thus, she looses some of his most essential theorizing and one of the key concepts of the book. In her translation, Bakhtin's sensual notion "live/vital experience of the collective immortality by the Collective Body" becomes a rational concept of "vivid awareness."[25] It is essential that immortality as discussed by Bakhtin, is not just "vivid" but "vital" for the Collective Body. Immortality also is not 'comprehended,' but is lived through/by, is experienced and carried inside, passed on from generation to generation by the Collective Body as its principle quality. Bakhtin twice repeats in the same sentence "vital experience of its collective historic immortality" and also places these words in different sentences and with an emphasis to stress his point, while Iswolsky omits Bakhtin's essential significations (repetition and font emphasis) in her translation for the sake of straightforwardness of academic English. However in this case particularly, shortening turns into loss: here the baby—the key concept—is thrown out with what seemed to be the water.

*Rodovoe telo*—Bakhtin's original concept, is something different from the notions of collective or cultural memory, archetypes, spiritual heritage, moral tradition, social skills, etc. It represents the spiritual, but particularly material and corporeal dimensions of what connects us with the past and future of humankind. And it is the *rodovoe telo*, the Collective Body, which is the main concern of all culture. If we could define in one sentence the purpose of culture, we would say that culture nurses the Collective Body. It teaches it how to survive, to connect and to procreate. It is the Collective Body, which, as the main protagonist of all cultural plots, and of all social dramas, reflected by art and culture, is the subject of my further research. The individual protagonist, which emerged in the lyric and tragedy, shadowed the very fact that in spite of the great importance of individual life, the single person's aspiration to find ways to unite with others, as well as his/her tragic inability to find this union, has constituted all cultural plots. The orientation of the individual life and individual body towards the integral Collective Body can be defined as a metaplot of culture. *Rodovoe telo*—the collective, birth-giving body—is the body giving birth not only to people as a biological kind, but also to culture. Thus, it is a corporeal reason of culture, the *culture-generating body.*

The Collective Body theory does not indeed deny the legacy of the individual hero, but rather (re)identifies and (re)orients him. The dying off of a tragic hero or any single character is, in fact, an atrophy of one of the Collective Body's vital parts. Even worse—the inability of the heroes to connect to each other in a procreative way, in a way of responsibility for the unity (any unity), that would provide a well-being and future for the Collective Body, generates all manners of tragic genres. Unlike in the epic genre of the past, where the Collective Body was functioning as a kinship-protagonist represented in its harmony and in the literal mode, in our time the image of the Collective Body is shown in a highly dramatic mode and as a complex metaphor rather than a collective entity. It has been (re)invented by Bakhtin as a provocative and controversial concept, whose goal is to point at the missing or lacking mode of modern cultural consciousness; and precisely in this capacity it is emphasized in the dissertation. The loss or underestimation of this concept not only in scholarship, but more important in culture itself, leads to dead ends in the life of the Collective Body; postmodern culture is a vivid example of it. Quoting Ghete, Bakhtin emphasizes that "fear in culture reflects a part that is aware of its separation from the whole", and one can add—a part that lost physical ways and mental constructs for overcoming the separation.[26]

The festive organization of the crowd, according to Bakhtin, is one of the possible ways for the Collective Body to reveal itself visually and tangibly in popular culture, to restore the sensation of the unity. From the standpoint of this study, Bakhtin's carnival theory can be seen (among all) as a mode of revelation and manifestation of the Collective Body. In the carnival, the organization of the crowd, stresses Bakhtin, must be first of all concrete and sensual.[27] "Even the pressing throne, the physical contact of bodies, acquires a certain meaning. The individual feels that s/he is an indissoluble part of the collectivity, a member of the people's mass body. In this whole the individual body ceases to a certain extent to be itself; it is possible, so to say, to exchange bodies, to be renewed (through change of costume and mask). At the same time people become aware of their sensual, material bodily unity and community." Bakhtin quotes Goethe concerning the self-awareness that the amphitheater brought to the people; thanks to it, they could perceive the concrete, sensual, visible form of their mass and unity.

> In the amphitheater "crowded together, its members are astonished at themselves. They are accustomed at other times to seeing each other running hither and thither in confusion, bustling about without order or discipline. Now this many-headed, many-minded, fickle, blundering monster suddenly sees itself united as one noble assembly, welded into one mass, a single body animated by a single spirit."[28]

One should add, however, that before the theatre circle emerged, there had been the ritual circle—protostructure for amphitheater—which united the collective body in the ritual action. As Bakhtin emphasizes, the unity, described by Goethe, does not have a simple geometric or statistical character. It is more complex and differentiated, and most important of all, it has an historic nature. The body of the people (on carnival square), as Bakhtin puts it, is first of all aware of its unity in time; it is conscious of its uninterrupted continuity within time, of its relative historic immortality. The collective body of people, stresses Bakhtin, perceives its unity not as a static image, but instead as an uninterrupted continuity of its becoming and growth, of the unfinished metamorphosis of death and/as renewal.[29] This point is extremely important for further clarification of the Collective Body's processual structure.

Bakhtin's famous book on Rabelais and popular culture of Middle Ages and Renaissance fascinated readers so much by his developments in carnival theory that the interrelated issue of the collective body, in fact, has been pushed into the background. A true subject and protagonist of carnival culture, it was left without proper attention. However, the questions, "whose carnival is it? Who is the protagonist of the carnival tradition and its driving force?" have always received insufficient answers. Marxist interpretation—"the people" (a sacred notion within the totalitarian ideology), which has provided Bakhtin's book a legitimate life in Soviet culture, is still incomplete. There is much more than "the people" present in both the socio-political and historical dimensions in Bakhtin's theory of culture, that Soviet scholarship was ready to accept. It is the *rodovoe telo,* which embraces the notion of the people (and in some ways opposes its Marxist interpretation—an issue to be discussed below), who is the true protagonist of the carnival and popular culture. However, carnival and popular culture are not the only spheres where the Collective Body matters, but they are the spheres, where it vividly and openly demonstrates itself, being temporarily freed from the usual appearances of social organizations and restrictions. The Collective Body represents a symbolic construction of the community; it is not a material embodiment of a group of contemporaries, but is vitally essential for them as a meaning, a symbolic construct. The Collective Body is easier to explain through its alterations—it is not any of the following: state, community, class, etc. In the words of Bakhtin: it is the people as a whole, but organized in their own way, the way of the people. Although, I should stress that all types of unity mentioned above can be successfully achieved only with a construct of the Collective Body in the collective unconscious.

Bakhtin's *Rodovoe telo* manifests a universal concept, however, speaking of its origins, one should refer to the special significance and archetypal quality of the idea of the collective in Russian culture. It is possible to say that in the 1940s, when the notion of *rodovoe telo* was first formulated by Bakhtin, he picked up where the mainstream of Russian culture had left off. The collective, the community versus individual has remained a subject of both culture and social life in Russia from ancient times until today. For centuries, the enslaved Russian people were referred to by the lords or themselves as the community. All of them as a community, not each individual separately, as for example in American slavery, were a subject of social and economic relations in Russia, being responsible for the harvest collectively. A senior member, *starosta,* negotiated with the landlord in all cases on behalf of the community as a whole. It is no surprise that the community considered itself in Russia the cosmos, the subject of biological life on earth. The community, *obshchina* had another name in Russian—*mir,* which means "world." Therefore, the community, the collective in the Russian anthropology of meaning was a *world in itself,* and the *world itself,* the human universe. No doubt, these very special cultural meanings determined a great deal the key notions of Bakhtin's cultural theory. This model based on the Russian cultural tradition—modern conceptualizations of animism and ancestral belief—should be discussed in the context of Russian *Cosmism*—philosophical cosmology and the symbolic construction of the community in Russian thought.[30] Fedorov created his model of the universe, where humankind, as a community, would become happy and harmonious as soon as all ancestors would return into it—would be revived—literally, not metaphorically; not as guardian spirits, but as persons with their unique lives (compare with the second coming in Christianity). Fedorov's philosophy reveals a deep connection in the collective unconscious of the Russian people not only with each other as a community, but also with ancestors. His ideas represent an invariant of ancestor belief in nineteenth-century culture, in a modus of modern philosophy. The sacred spiritual and deep bodily connection with the immortal dead fathers, as well as with the sons—the progeny to come (an essential original feature of Fedorov's philosophy)—had the same origins as Bakhtin's belief in the vital power and significance of the immortal Collective Body. Bakhtin stressed in terms of semiotics: "There is absolutely nothing dead: every meaning will have the celebration of its own rebirth."[31] Immortality, as Bakhtin repeatedly stressed in his book on carnival, is the essential characteristic of the body of the people. Various researchers, attempting recently to emphasize the root paradigm of Russian philosophy as a system, define it as "Cosmism," "*vseedinstvo*" (all-Unity), or "organicism"; all these definitions are correct and reflect the specific "integral" mode of thinking that undoubtedly has influenced Bakhtin.[32]

The Collective Body concept is very significant in many ways for twentieth-century culture. Needless to say, the fascists' fight against Jews took the form of a fight against not only the beliefs, but the body of the Jewish people—a body which was planned to be destroyed as such in the camps' ovens. It is most notable that the archaic-like fascist consciousness referred to the Jews precisely as a collective body. It was not the quantity of Jewish individuals, but the whole of the Jewish Collective Body capable of surviving and procreating future generations—precisely women and children—which was designated to be destroyed.[33] For me personally, my understanding of Bakhtin's initial idea was triggered by a visual symbol—metaphorical image, which varies in several memorials—monuments to the victims of the World War II. They express one image—multiple heads, legs, arms of men, women and children reaching out from one giant collective body being destroyed. This visual metaphor helped a great deal in my understanding of the very concept of the Collective Body. Not the individual, but the Collective Body is the true subject of ritual, which is an extremely interesting potential sphere of research on the intersection of Bakhtin's ideas with those of Turner and Western anthropology.[34] Trial, a ritual modality that has become an archetype of modern cinema, is a performing transformative ritual, which attempts to restore the wholeness and procreative abilities of the Collective Body, regardless of wrongful interactions among individuals.[35] It seems obvious that the contemporary trial represents the defense of the individual. However, the judge, the prosecutor, the lawyer, the accused, the victim, the witnesses and the crowd can also symbolize the dismembered Collective Body with explicitly contradictory interests among various parts. The trial is a microcosm of the Collective Body intended to restore its loss of wholeness—a vital condition for life continuation. It is not surprising that the trial occupies such an incredibly significant place in North American culture; the countless trial stories represent the Collective Body in action, in the state of crisis overcoming and surviving as such again and again. It is, in fact, a function of the Collective Body to survive again and again no matter what. The abstract concept of national identity has its corporeal and material dimension—the collective body of the people who identify or are supposed to identify themselves with a particular culture.[36] There are countless examples of how the Collective Body concept brings new dimensions to topical social and cultural issues.

But if this concept is so topical, why it is so underestimated and misunderstood? It reminds us of some essential notions that we have lost. Modern societies, both in the East and in the West, for different reasons did lose self-identification as a collective body, and therefore are missing some vital aspects in the very orientation of the self among humankind. The Collective Body concept has been overlooked in recent scholarship also because it contradicts the postmodern system of meanings. Twentieth-century culture has repeatedly exposed the reality of human alienation. But we cannot simply accept the fact that each independent individual has his/her separate life line, or, as postmodernism has demonstrated, that people have no ways of fitting, understanding and connecting to each other. In the age of AIDS, we cannot ignore the fact, even if we want to or used to ignore it, that all the people are bodily conjoined, associated, and that each individual is only a part of the giant unity—the Collective Body. If one does manage to survive as an isolated monad, having escaped AIDS or other dangers in his/her individual life, there is no guarantee that his/her offshoot, a cherished child would not be touched by someone's deadly corporeal touch, that his/her future mode of individual existence would not be affected indirectly. There are many ways in which people are or can be connected to each other in order to provide a continuation of life. Culture's main function is to explore them. There is a certain logic that reality reminds modern societies of what and who we are—the collective body, the biological kind, the corporeal unity of people struggling together for survival in a complex environment.

To understand the logic behind the misinterpretation of this concept, one should remember that Western civilization emerged by the individual overcoming his dependence on the collective. However, the importance and therefore the autonomy of the individual has been overstressed in both civilization and culture as systems of meanings.[37] One may also say that the Western mentality has grown suspicious of all kinds of collective logic, which indeed has compromised itself in the twentieth century—witnessed the damage caused by the totalitarian political regimes of national socialism and communism. Aspects of rod (kinship) in Bakhtin's *rodovoe telo*, on the other hand, could have been associated with the socio-cultural structures of ancient societies, and thus considered unessential for contemporary cultural theory.

Although Bakhtin's philosophical metaphor of the Collective Body is reminiscent to some extent of Aristotle's "body politic," Spencer's idea of *superorganic* (society as an organism), and Hemingway's "for whom the bell tolls," [38] his metaphor for the reasons mentioned above has not received so far the attention it deserves. The concept of the Collective Body, as a symbolic meaning, possibly politically loaded, misinterpreted or wrongly narrowed to the issues of tribal societies, might have been overlooked as archaic, degrading and potentially dangerous in its ideological impact on the individual, moving him/her towards a collective identity of people as a totality and mechanic unity (in terms of Durkheim).[39] The notion of the collective, indeed, may become and has become a basis for brainwashing—misinterpretation for the sake of ideological and political interest in various mass movements. That explains why the concept of the Collective Body would seem suspicious and regressive for Western thought, as Berlin noted, "necessary...

Utopian to the eyes of social historians born in the industrialized west."[40] Especially taking into an account the political contexts of our century, it is important to emphasize that Bakhtin's Collective Body notion should not be confused with fanaticism, nationalism, cult movements and other deviations in the psychology of mass movements.[41]

Ironically and paradoxically, this controversial concept was no less alien and dangerous for Soviet ideology, on whose territory, technically speaking, it was conceived. Bakhtin's Collective Body represents an opposition not only to the ideology of individualism but also to the ideology of totalitarianism. In order to understand this contradiction, one should remember the meanings of 'mass' and 'people,' which served as basic notions for Soviet ideology. Corporeal reality, bodily life, survival of the collective body were very uncomfortable notions for the totalitarian reality, where biological life could never be placed before the political.[42] The ideology of a totalitarian state could never appreciate a notion of the collective body. Its system of meanings was associated with political power, which praised the struggle of sons against fathers and brothers against brothers for 'superior' ideological reasons. It was power that wasted human bodies by the millions, sending people into the black holes of history, where no biological life could survive—fields of wars, camps, blockades, hunger, nuclear experiments, etc. The individual exists in the totalitarian system of meanings not as a body, someone's child, husband/wife or potential father/mother—a chain in the immortal collective body, but as a social (often political/military) function, a demographic figure, a statistical coin change. The sacred notions of mass, class, people, proletariat, nation—the basics for totalitarian ideology—cannot be interpreted as the collective body. In ideologized social systems, bodies are not meant to survive and procreate, but are predetermined to be sacrificed for the sake of abstractions. The biological survival of human society is irrelevant to their political agenda: what is important is the victory of ideas as a universal "social purpose." Corporeal existence is always relegated to the insignificant secondary level in totalitarian societies, always referred to as a required loss on the road toward the ideal. The political unity is clearly more important for totalitarian systems than the biological unity, wholeness of the humankind. The society concerned about the collective body, the survival of the kind, would never hide information on the Chernobyl disaster from thousands of adults marching with kids through invisible clouds of radiation towards the ideologically signified May parade, annual Soviet festival of spring—a demonstration of the proletarian unity.

Characteristically, Soviet ideology approached the people as a means rather than an end. Not only did the life of a single individual not matter, as is well known, in Soviet society, but the biological existence of the masses had no value as well. Always suppressing all bodily aspects of culture, and praising the working people of the present and the radiant communist future as sacred meanings, Soviet ideology ignored the corporeal reality, the biological survival of both the people and their future. Bakhtin's concept of the Collective Body as a purpose, not as a means, was controversial and politically incorrect in the context of Soviet ideology, easily falling into the category of inadmissible, if not prohibited, meanings. The philosophy of the Collective Body—a future basis for Bakhtin's famous carnival theory—was hypothetically conceived by the philosopher in the late 1930s in his exile in Siberia, when millions were dying in Stalinist camps, and was developed during World War II, when other millions perished. No doubt, the very conception of Bakhtin's ideas resonated, echoed the historical scream—the dying out of the collective body. Notions of the collective, archetypal and sacred for Russian culture, have lost during the Soviet period their (pro)creative dimension. The Collective Body has been transmuted into the collective function and ideological ecstasy of "hurrah-collectivism." The wholeness of the life-generating body was, without any concern about its future, turned into the disintegration of the exhausted, ruthlessly manipulated and utilized society, collectively deprived of biological life.

Thus, this vital concept fell into semantic and axiological gaps inside both societies, and therefore was overlooked and misinterpreted.[43] In simple words, one can say, that the concept to be expressed by the combination "The Collective Body" contained the two key words, which happen to be 'taboo words': the notion of the body was unacceptable for the Soviet ideology, the concept of the collective, for the West. Thus, the Collective Body concept became equally controversial within the contexts of Western thought and Soviet ideology. It represents somewhat differently from mass society, Durkheim's "mechanical unity" or Ortega y Gasset's "man-mass," which manifest a lack of inner connection of biological-spiritual nature between individuals within the mass. Bakhtin's *rodovoe telo* rather represents a life force, or an organizing vital substance/energy—an invisible and indefinable unity, which connects people with each other in respect to their common future. It can be discussed rather in the terms of Turner, who was trying to create a similar concept. Failing to find notions capable of describing the special unity of individuals within the Western system of meanings, Turner turned to the categories of Zen. He borrowed from Zen a concept of *prajñã*—"the self-knowledge of the whole." Turner quotes Suzuki, who discusses *prajñã* in contrast to *vijñãna* "which busies itself with the parts." According to Zen, the concept of *prajñã*, emphasized by Turner, is "an integrating principle, while *vijñãna* always analyzes. The dialectics between *prajñã* and *vijñãna* can be presented in the context of Bakhtin's philosophy as a dialectics between the perspective of the Collective Body and the perspective of the individual or an interest/political group or social segment. "*Vijñãna* cannot work without having *prajñã* behind it; parts are parts of the whole; parts never exist by themselves, for, if they did, they would not be parts—they would even cease to exist."[44] This "wholeness" of *prajñã,"* writes Turner further, "resembles Znaniecki's idea of "community" as the real source of the interconnection of cultural and social systems and subsystems. One can add that it also resembles Turner's own conception of *communitas*, developed by him later in a number of works.[45] However, Turner emphasized the liminality and equalness, as well as lack of hierarchy as essential qualities of *communitas,* which he discussed as a manifestation of antistructure in contrast to social structure. Turner's concept of human unity—*communitas*—does not coincide with that of Bakhtin—*rodovoe telo.* Unlike Turner's *communitas,* hierarchy is essential within Bakhtin's Collective Body, but it is 'biological' rather than social hierarchy—a hierarchy of spiritual-biological qualities/values capable of fulfilling the ultimate goal of humankind—continuation of life.[46] It is important to emphasize that Bakhtin's 'biological' is not the "irrational, immoral" versus "rational, moral" (typical binary oppositions of Western culture), and it is not selfish hedonism of the individual. *Rodovoe telo* represents a form of harmony, it is a notion of creative/procreative abilities integrating the biological with the spiritual, psychological and cultural. It is a dominant directed at providing the best conditions for the mental and physical state of the progeny, as well as a harmonious connection of the young and living with the elderly and the dead. Turner interprets *prajñã* as intuition—the wholeness of mind—while Bakhtin's concept has more to do with the wholeness of people. With help from Suzuki, Turner provides a clear explanation why such concepts as *prajñã* (and *rodovoe telo*) had little chance of being understood in the West (Suzuki-Turner's explanation also clarifies the difficulties of writing this paper):[47]

> *Prajñã* is ever seeking unity on the grandest possible scale, so that there could be no further unity in any sense; whatever expressions or statement it makes are thus naturally beyond the order of *vijñãna. Vijñãna* subjects them to intellectual analysis, trying to find something comprehensible according to its own measure. But... *prajñã* starts from where *vijñãna* cannot penetrate. *Vijñãna* being the principle of differentiation, can never see *prajñã* in its oneness, and it is because of the very nature of *vijñãna* that *prajñã* proves utterly baffling to it.[48]

*Rodovoe telo* is also a unity tending to be manifest at the grandest possible scale, and never embodied in reality. It is a symbolic, in a sense, a metaphorical-growing-into the mythological unity.[49] Thus, it can be defined as a tendency rather than a material manifestation. If *rodovoe telo* were to be defined in terms of the philosophy of culture, it should be presented as a notion of the multistructured matrix-type harmonious relationship between the individual and the kinship /society, and also the relationship within the body of contemporaries, as well as a connection to ancestors, with just one main purpose in mind: the well-being of the progeny, both physical and mental. The Collective Body is not merely a concept. Bakhtin translates an abstract category into the flesh and blood of the mythological image. In fact, all his vivid and metaphorical concepts (heteroglossia—multiple voices, polyphony, carnival, dialog, autonomous universe of meanings, etc.) tend to outgrow the limits of a purely analytical, abstract mind and to constitute a form of cultural mythology. The dialectical alliance within this integral unity that always tends to disintegrate, is manifested in the idea of the Collective Body which is essentially a root metaphor. As such, it manifests a poetic logic and establishes a language of philosophical mythology, or "mythological philosophy." It represents a perspective on life in general and on its every event, different from that of the individual and one-body's place in the world. Its unique perspective represents not only a multiple 'wide angle' of the Collective Body, but also the extending angle of the growing Collective Body. Thus, this notion contains an intrinsic time dimension, a specific Chronotope of the Collective Body. In Bakhtin's semiotic tradition (the one which has influenced poststructuralism), the meaning is a process, rather than an object. From this viewpoint, the Collective Body should be represented not as a frozen concept, a symbol, but rather as a mode in the history of culture, a processual mode of organization, formation and determination of the harmonious relationship among human beings.

Turner emphasizes that *prajñā*—intuition—is its becoming conscious of itself.[50] *Rodovoe telo,* as Bakhtin proved in his book on the carnival rituals, is characteristic of the same: ritual is formed as a system of actions determined by the self-awareness of the Collective body and aimed at its regeneration and healthy transformation from the old to the new—what in fact, coincides with the paradigms of Turner's general theory of ritual. Although Turner worked with the ethnographic data of particular cultures, his conclusions and generalizations have the status of the semiotics of ritual. Interestingly, Turner described a collision and resolution that he encountered during his fieldwork in Africa in the terms of the Collective Body notion. The collision of hostility and rivalry was healed by the enemies' ritual revelation regarding each other: "was he not blood of their blood, born from the same womb? Had he not been part of their corporate life?"[51] It is no surprise that the Collective Body concept is essential for anthropology, as it has been vital for the traditional, kinship societies. What is an influence of matrilineal relationship within an anthropological system of meanings in Turner's studies of ritual, develops to the scale of a mythological and philosophical conceptualization of culture for Bakhtin.

The Collective Body concept, emphasized and, so to speak, returned by Bakhtin, into the philosophy of culture, opens new opportunities to reconsider major issues of anthropology, narratology, literary studies. From its perspective many well-known plots may be reinterpreted and reconsidered. Does *Hamlet* represent just a tragedy of the reflective individual and an issue of his moral choice? Or does the play explores a schism, breach inside the Collective Body which, therefore, reveals a highly complex intrinsic system of identifications, where the dead ancestor—the father king, the new king—his brother, the mother, the prince, his bride-not-to be—a potential mother of the prince's never-to-be-born progeny, the people of Denmark, the servants and pals, as well as the model-within-the model—the performance—all are the representation of the integral Collective Body—a true composite protagonist of culture? Needless to say *King Lear, War and Peace* or, turning from classics to North American popular culture, *The Silence of the Lambs, Forrest Gump, Pulp Fiction, ER* and even *The Lion King* (a *Hamlet* for kindergarten) in this context would then cry out for re-signification in the context of the Collective Body's semantics. Therefore, the reinterpretation of the protagonist in major works of world culture would be a logical result of the discussion of the Collective Body concept.[52] From the standpoint of narratology and drama theory, the Collective Body is major cultural function is in re-establishing lost and vital connections between individuals and in addressing the ever topical unity quest. The Collective Body represents a polyphonic multidimensional perspective versus monodimensional ones, those of the individual or totalitarian mass, described by Bakhtin in his other works.[53] Its polyphonic type of vision—simultaneously from different perspectives—and its integral social status, which transcends the borders among groups, classes and generations, results in completely divergent concepts of time, space, action and other related notions, and, therefore, calls into question established notions of common sense and narratology.[54] One could say that the Collective Body has its own cosmology and creates its own Universe. In light of the Collective Body concept, other important discoveries of Bakhtin's cultural theory reveal new meanings and integral connection with each other as a complete philosophical system. If Bakhtin's *heteroglossia*—the controversial interpretation of the same meanings or impossibility of understanding each other's words (ability/inability for a dialogue)—is a problem of different independent individuals within a society, it is already bad enough. But if it is the misunderstanding within a biological chorus, semantic deregulation inside the Collective Body—a dysfunction of the supporting system/mechanism of the humankind's life continuation—it is a much more alarming and significant issue. The overcoming of *heteroglossia*, as well as of monologism, developing dialogic skills then, from the perspective of the Collective Body, becomes not a sophisticated affair, cultural luxury, but an urgent matter of life itself.

Several scholars who have written on Bakhtin, view carnavalesque, one of his major concepts, as something which needs to be resurrected or invented in the twentieth century.[55] In a similar way, the Collective Body concept should be revived most definitely as well, especially within the semiosphere of postmodern cultural critique.[56] With its revitalizing force, the Collective Body notion can become essential in the search for new meanings as an alternative to the ideology of postmodernism, to the ideas of total alienation, hopelessness and the vicious circle of time.[57] Postmodernity reflects and emphasizes the disintegration of the individual as such into the "composite identity" and doubts his/her biological existence, proved to be just another simulacrum. Counterfeits, signs, symbols, shadows, reflections—impostors without flesh and blood displaced human beings in the postmodern model of the world. The Collective Body concept, with its non-triviality and multidimensional vision, can adequately answer many ontological questions of postmodern philosophy, offering alternative solutions to the cultural puzzles. Bakhtin's Collective Body, originating from the ancient notion of *rod* as a collective protagonist of culture, paradoxically intertwines with Hutcheon's notion of the "composite protagonist" topical for understanding recent postmodern cultural phenomena.[58] The interconnection of both concepts results in the new issue—that of the integral protagonist in contemporary culture. Bakhtin's philosophy also offers a "composite identity," but of a corporeal, material kind, so that humanity does not have to leave the battlefield between reality and simulacra to simulations, but may join forces to survive biologically and to produce new generations of full-blooded life. An individual indeed is an integral part of something larger than his fate; he is a part of the all-penetrating macrocultural streams that constitute him. However, those are not all-dominating and reality-repressing semantic processes (in Baudrillard's terms), but the evolution of life.

The Collective Body may seem to be a manifestation of nostalgia for tribal unity, for utopian archaic integral identity—kinship as a subject versus the individual. The Collective Body issue indeed may be misinterpreted this way, and even acted out upon this misinterpretation toward the reversed course of history for ideological purposes. However, it has nothing to do with postmodern nostalgia—a permanent mode within the postmodern system of meanings. The Collective Body theory indeed incorporates the appreciation of the initial act of creation /procreation, the primary maternal body of all—of the kinship. But with the enigmatic presence of the past within the present in the Collective Body, it is the caring help of the ancestor in our everyday concerns and needs for life continuation that is emphasized. The Collective Body is essentially directed towards the "*present pregnant for the sake of future.*" The mode of actualization, the emphasis on the present, the transformation of the present into the productive, effective, fruitful present is the focus of the Collective Body's integral activity. Metaphorically speaking, the heart of the Collective Body belongs with today, the centre of its multiple energy, its *chakhra* points are focused on us, the living, on now and here. In this, the Collective Body is equally alternative /opposite to the Past dominating over the Present, and to the Infertile Present, the simulation of life versus the true life continuation.

The human being, the individual cannot just disappear from the cultural arena, even suppressed by the twentieth-century logic of mass societies, consumerism and virtual reality. Culture cannot accept the idea of dead ends and stop asking eternal questions. The one, indeed is a part of the whole, but what is the nature of this whole? Is it anything beyond a family, a social group, class, nation, and how does one relate to this whole? Is there more to our link with ancestors and progeny than just a memory? How does culture relate to the ultimate goals of humankind—creativity and life continuation? The Collective Body—one of culture's key symbols and archetypal metaphors—was authentic and integral for ancient ritual and mythological mind, but forgotten by modern civilization. Revived and emphasized by Bakhtin fifty years ago, as an essential notion within his philosophy of culture, it can be effectively used now as a radical concept in various ways by cultural critique and scholarship in the Humanities. The idea of *the ancestral—the collective—the birth-giving body* (signified "the Collective Body" further in the text) carries enormous philosophical potential and is capable of bringing new dimensions to many urgent cultural issues in modern societies.

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[1] This definition belongs to Marcus and Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique,* 61. For conflicting variety of definitions and misinterpretations of the term "ritual," see, for example, Grimes, *Ritual Criticism* and Schechner, *The Future of Ritual,* 228.

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[2] Marcus and Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique,* 61. For Durkheim and his followers, ritual is a set of practices through which the participants relate to the sacred. See Emile Durkheim, "The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life" and William A. Lessa, Introduction in *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach,* ed. William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vost (New York, 1979), 220. For Kluckhohn "ritual is a system of object and act symbols," see Clyde Kluckhohn, "Myths and Rituals: A General Theory," in *Reader in Comparative Religion,* 71. According to Lessa, ritual is also often viewed as a non-traditional means (however efficacious for the actors) to achieve culturally defined ends; its symbols are characterized as condensed, containing multiple meanings; and as action, it is elaborate, drawn out, highly repetitive human behavior. See William A. Lessa, Introduction to Edmund R. Leach, "Ritualization in Man in Relation to Conceptual and Social Development," in *Reader in Comparative Religion,* 229.

[3] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols,* 19.

[4] Ronald L. Grimes, *Symbol and Conquest: Public Ritual and Drama in Santa Fe, New Mexico* (Ithaca, 1976), 16.

[5] Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture,* 244. On ceremony, see also Grimes: "The ceremonial elements in a rite are those processes that are concerned with negotiations of power between groups or that attempt to defend and extend a social ideology," *Ritual Criticism,* 101. Interestingly, Baudrillard in his "The Ceremony of the World" calls ceremony a "disorder of the rule" in his critique of the postmodern cultural condition. He develops an approach, accordant to that of Turner-Grimes, toward the ceremony as a form of violence. See Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies,* trans. Philip Beitchman and W.G.J. Niesluchowski, ed. Jim Fleming (New York, 1990), 166-79.

[6] The definition of Turner's method as a processual symbolic analysis was coined by Charles Keyes. In Turner's own words "Processual analysis assumes cultural analysis, just as it assumes structural-functional analysis, including more static comparative-functional analysis. It negates none of these, but puts dynamics first," Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors,* 44. For more on processual symbolic analysis, see Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage,* 24; and Victor W. Turner, "Symbolic Studies" in *Annual Review of Anthropology,* ed. B. Siegal *et al* (Palo Alto, 1975), 145-61.

[7] However, I strongly agree with Hardin that Girard's limitation of ritual to sacrifice (and therefore to the scapegoat process) narrows the concept of ritual excessively. For more critique of Girard's approach, see Hardin, "'Ritual' in Recent Criticism," 855-857. It should be stressed, nevertheless, that Girard's theorization of ritual has several important points. First, in respect to the old discussion on positive and negative aspects of representation of violence in art, Girard believes that these practices are homeopathic: a little ritual violence inoculates a society against more general and destructive anarchic violence. Schechner puts this idea as the ritual violence "mortgaging death." On his discussion of Girard's perspective, see Schechner, *The Future of Ritual,* 260. Second, in Girard's view, the great tragedies signal a reaction

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against the excess of community in ritual by asserting the claim of the suffering individual compelled by a socially determined necessity. It is essential to point out that he refers here to the socially organized community, a "society," rather than to the Collective Body or Turner's *communitas* type of relationship. Girard's ideas may contribute to understanding the controversial reflections of ritual in Soviet antitotalitarian culture. However, it is important to underline the difference between the "socially determined community" in Girard's terms (which is equal to the "structure," in Turner's terms) and Bakhtin's Collective Body, which characteristically does not oppose and sacrifice one life for the sake of the whole; according to Bakhtin, one life is/represents the whole. As will be shown in the film analyses, conflicts involving ritual structures in totalitarian society are determined by the sacrifice of a single life *equal to the whole* Collective Body for the sake of "social organization." Thus, the type of conflict that Girard refers to, which indeed is typical and sharp in the antitotalitarian cinema art, represents not a conflict between the individual and community as such, but rather between the social forms of life continuation and life destruction.

[8] Turner, *Blazing the Trial: Way Marks in the Exploration of Symbols,* 87.

[9] Ibid., 88.

[10] This chapter was presented at the international conference on semiotics, *Popular Culture: Foundations and Futures,* the University of Toronto, October 18, 1996. With regards to the question when Bakhtin's ideas of *rodovoe telo* were conceived, the completion of his dissertation on Rabelais—late 1940s—may be considered the time of birth of Bakhtin's Collective Body theory. However, 1930s and 1940s with the landscape of demolition of the Soviet collective body—mass hunger and mass purges—may hypothetically be considered the time when the theory was coming into being.

[11] "Ancestral body" in the translation by Hélène Iswolsky. See, Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* trans. by Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington, 1984) from Bakhtin's text *Tvorchestvo Fransua Rable and narodnaia kul'tura srednevekov'ia i vozrozhdeniia* (Hereafter: Creative Works by François Rabelais and Folk Culture of the Middle Ages and Renaissance) (Moscow, 1965). On the controversy of translation, "*rodovoe telo*" vs. "ancestral body," compare, for example, pages 350-51 of the Russian edition with pages 323-24 in the American edition. In this chapter and in the thesis all the translations of texts, quotations and titles from Russian are mine, if not stated otherwise.

[12] According to Caryl Emerson's *The First Hundred Years of Bakhtin*—the most thorough recent study of Bakhtin's influence on the humanities, the concept *rodovoe telo* has not been discussed. Emerson briefly mentions it on the page 201, translating as 'clan body' in the context of Luidmila Gogotishvili's article, "Varianty i invarianty M.M. Bakhtina" (Variants and Invariants of M.M. Bakhtin) in *Voprocy Filosofii,* 1 (1992: 114-34). The closest concepts to *rodovoe telo* in some aspects are to be found in Emerson's book in her conceptualization of Bakhtin's "open-ended bodies" and in Pankov's discussion of "the body of the people," in which Pankov critiques Bakhtin for its romanticization. See, Alexandr Pankov, *Razgadka M.*

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*Bakhtina* [Solution of M. Bakhtin] (Moscow, 1995) and/or Emerson's discussion of his work in *The First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin,* 165-66. For more on "the Bakhtin industry" see, for example, Gary Saul Morson, "The Bakhtin Industry," *Slavic and East European Journal* 30 (1 1986): 81-90; *Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on His Work,* ed. Gary Saul Morson (Chicago, 1986); *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory,* eds., Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd, (Manchester, 1989); *Bakhtinskii sbornik,* No 1 (Bakhtinian Collection), eds. Isupov, K.G., D. Kuyundjich, V.L. Makhlin and O.E. Osoevsky (Moscow, 1990). Although there are no works on Bakhtin's concept of *rodovoe telo* signified as the Collective Body in this research, it is difficult to imagine that such a significant and paradigmatic concept would be completely overlooked in academia. There are a number of works, whose authors have approached the problematics of the Collective Body from various perspectives, for example, Roy Armes, *Action and Image: Dramatic Structure in Cinema* (Manchester & New York, 1994), the chapter "The Group as Protagonist," Judith Hulberstam and Ira Levingston. *Posthuman Bodies* (Bloomington, 1995), the chapter "Multiple Bodies," and in Robert Stam's *Subversive Pleasures: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism and Film.* (Baltimore, 1989), the chapter "Grotesque Body"—one of the most insightful books on Bakhtin in North American scholarship. Important observations on the issues close to the conception of the dissertation—various mass and mythological 'collective identities'—can be found in the works by Northrop Frye on Western literature, and in the work by Clark, *The Soviet Novel.*

[13] "Western critical theory has comfortably assimilated semiotic theory in its earlier structuralist mode, yet this appropriation has often distorted the basic premises of Slavic theory, resulting in elisions, misreadings, or impoverished interpretations." Amy Mandelker, "Logosphere and Semiosphere: Bakhtin, Russian Organicism and the Semiotics of Culture," in *Bakhtin in Contexts,* 177. Many other researchers emphasize translation problems with regards to Bakhtin's original concepts, see for example, *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory,* 202.

[14] Further developments of the Collective Body issue will be presented in my papers (in progress): "The Rhetoric of the Collective Body: Multiple Protagonist on the American Screen," "The Collective Body in Action and Process—in the Ritual, Drama and Narrative Structures," and "The Collective Body Concept and Bakhtin's Theory of Communication: Heteroglossia, Dialogue, and Polyphony."

[15] Bakhtin's concept can also be discussed in the context of the Jungian archetype of Magna Mater. *Rodovoe telo*—the Collective, Birth-giving body—central concept in Bakhtin's philosophy is a clear metaphor of a female body ascended to a status of a philosophical symbol. Finally, the Collective Body, which integrates both male and female bodies as the only productive unity, does not leave space for separatism (male vs. female), but on the contrary, declares their union as the only spiritual and fruitful one. In this context, the philosophical signification of birth-giving in Russian culture, vividly manifested in Bakhtin's cultural theory, may find additional arguments in Eric Naiman, "Hysterectomies: On the Metaphysics of Reproduction in a Utopian Age," in *Sexuality and the Body in Russian Culture,* eds. J.T. Costlow, S.

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Sandler, and J. Vowles (Stanford, 1993), 255-76. From the perspective of the semiotics of culture, Günther suggests that in Russian culture the notion *narod* (the people) in spite of its grammatical masculine gender, is closer to the feminine element. He refers to the root *rod* and a series of close notions, which represent the sphere of birth-giving, as well as to Berdiaev's concept of Russian "religiosity as that of the collective biological warmth," Günther, "Big Family," 104.

[16] I want to thank the first readers of this manuscript for interesting suggestions on translation of Bakhtin's neologism *rodovoe telo* as the Filial Body (Eliot Borenstein) and the Hereditary Body, the Genetic Body, the Genus Body and the Body of Genus (M. Dimic). In order to come up with the best possible translation of *rodovoe telo* in English, it would be also useful to explore how Bakhtin's neologism was translated into other languages in the texts of *Rabelais* in different cultures, for example, French, German, etc. However, I leave this question open and declare a 'call for a name', encouraging English speaking colleagues to come up with all possible suggestions for the match of Bakhtin's *rodovoe telo* in English. I hope that this thesis will help in clarifying the meaning of this concept in culture.

[17] It is interesting to stress the etymological and philosophical connection between Bakhtin's concept *rodovoe telo* (Collective Body) and the primary gods in Russian mythological heritage—the divine couple Rod and Rozhanitsia. Rod was the Slavic god of kinship (his name means "kinship") and Rozhanitsia was the goddess of birth (her name means "the birth-giving"). Bakhtin's concept *rodovoe telo* philosophically and semantically united the meaning-images of the two deities. For more on the mythological deities Rod and Rozhanitsia and their focal place in the semiosphere of Slavic mythology, see A.N. Afanas'ev, *Drevo zhizni* (The Tree of Life). (Moscow, 1983) and Cherepanova, *Myths and Legends of the Russian North.*

[18] The choice of one term in the text is determined purely by the convenience of reading and coherence of a scholarly text, however it always refers to the polysemantic complex meaning described in this chapter. The term 'Collective Body' throughout the dissertation functions as a code rather than a name, carrying within a multifaceted content explained in this chapter. I admit that the choice of the Collective Body as a primary translation has its shortcomings because it has political connotations with Soviet ideology and the communist system of meanings, and may be associated with a group-minded impersonal element, or with Durkheimian mechanic rather than organic unity. For example, unity it was used in the recent Slavic post-Soviet scholarship in this precise meaning of impersonal group-minded mechanic. See, for instance, Vladislav Todorov, *Red Square, Black Square* (Albany, 1995). However, in this study I am using the term Collective Body to re-signify Bakhtin's notion in an opposite direction—organic unity (of an Enterprise-type rather than a Borg-type, in terms of popular culture, *Star Trek: Next Generation*).

[19] See Bakhtin, *Tvorchestvo Fransua Rable,* 350, and *Rabelais and His World,* 323.

[20] In Bakhtin's original text the word *novobrachnye* (the newly married) means both genders. Thus, the procreative unity of the two bodies/genders is signified. Iswolsky uses "newly married men"—a meaning which reduces the 'collective body' aspect of the two in the newlywed couple to that of the males,

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and Ukrainian nineteenth and twentieth-century philosophers: Fedorov, Sukhovo-Kobylin, Florensky, Berdyaev, Bulgakov, Tsiolkovsky, Vernadsky, Chizhevsky, etc. This tradition should be discussed in the contexts of philosophy and cultural anthropology, particularly, anthropology of consciousness, as well as comparative religion and intellectual history. On Russian philosophy "as organic architecture of the world" see *Russkii kosmizm* (Russian Cosmism), eds. S.G. Semyonova and A.G. Gacheva (Moscow, 1993)—in particular, P. Florensky, "*Organoproektsiia*" (Organoprojection) and A.V. Sukhovo-Kobylin, "*O edinstve chelovechestva vo Vselennoi*" (On the Unity of Humankind in the Universe). In the context of the Collective Body-concept and the philosophy of cosmism, Russian religious thinker of the early 1900s, Vladimir Solov'ev, should also be mentioned. The key idea of his philosophy is in the concept of "spiritual corporeality" (*dukhovnaia telesnost*)—the bodily essence of spirituality. This focal idea is also manifest through the concepts of All-Unity (*Vseedinstvo*)—the unity of all—and Divine Mankind (*Bogochelovechestvo*)—the divinity of humankind. The real substance and the body are manifestations or crystallizations of World Soul, disintegrated in our time; they have lost its purity, sacredness, but still preserve the elements of Unity-of-All, and as such they represent the basis of life. Sexual love is meant to lead to the Unity-of-All and to the transfiguration of flesh in the image of God, reestablished on the horizontal, non-hierarchical level, mutually discovered and enacted by members of both sexes able to relate to each other as husband and wife. The overcoming of all human troubles is possible only by the reintegration of separated segments of reality disassociated by the World Evil, to reinforce, transform and sacralize their new connection, to reestablish it in the universal Unity-of All. Art, according to Solov'ev is designed to play an essential role in this process of reintegration and sacred transformation. It is easy to see the connection between Solov'ev's ideas and Bakhtin's and Turner's notions of the Collective Body and ritual. On Solov'ev's philosophic symbolism, see more, A.F. Losev, *Filosofiia. Mythologia. Kultura* (Philosophy. Mythology. Culture) (Moscow, 1991), 227-29. On Solov'ev as a Russian Orthodox precursor to Bakhtin, see Caryl Emerson, "Russian Orthodoxy and the Early Bakhtin," *Religion and Literature,* 22 (2-3, 1990): 109-32. And on Solov'ev's philosophical-mystical discourse, see Edith W. Clowes, "The Limits of Discourse: Solov'ev's Language of Syzygy and the Project of Thinking Total-Unity," [or the Unity-of-All—L.A.], *Slavic Review,* 55,.3 (Fall 1996): 552-56. The Total-Unity, or Unity-of-All (*Vseedinstvo*) may be considered one of the Collective Body's protoconcepts in the realm of philosophy. On the Unity-of-All as an integral and ongoing conception within Russian philosophy, see V.N. Akulinin, *Filosofiia Vseedinstva* (The Philosophy of Total Unity) (Novosibirsk, 1990). For the first time in the studies of Russian philosophy Akulinin discusses theories by Solov'ev, the Trubetskois, Bulgakov, Florensky, et al. as an integral philosophical system. Bakhtin's name should be included in this list.

[31] Bakhtin, *Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva* (Hereafter: Aesthetics of the Verbal Art) (Moscow, 1979), 273.

[32] The three conceptions/trends of the Russian thought should be emphasized as directly connected to Bakhtin's philosophy of culture: "Cosmism" by S.G. Semyonova and A.G. Gacheva, "The Total Unity"

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by V.N. Akulinin and "Organicism" by Amy Mandelker. On the latter, see Amy Mandelker, "Logosphere and Semiosphere: Bakhtin, Russian Organicism, and the Semiotics of Culture," in *Bakhtin in Contexts: Across the Disciplines.* She defines Vernadsky's noosphere as "superorganism that can function physically and cognitively in a manner impossible for each individual organism to achieve," 181.

[33] For Stalin, to deprive Jews of work socially and politically was not enough: weeks before his death, trains were prepared to transport all Jews from Moscow, Leningrad and urban centers to Siberia, in order to destroy the body of Jewish people. In a similar way, he attempted to transfer whole nations—collective bodies of other small ethnic groups—that of Daghestan and Chechnya from the Caucuses to Middle Asia. One indeed is a part of the whole: wars emphasize it, and aggressive archaic-type consciousness keeps it in mind. The murders in Yugoslavia, and in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict always occur as acts directed not against a guilty individual, but against any representative/part of the enemy's collective body.

[34] In modern North American popular culture, the notorious TV talk shows might be so ineradicable because they feed upon the ritual need of the Collective Body to heal its sick parts inside the unity circle and by means of its healing power. This is certainly a reason for the enormous success of such TV series as *ER* (*Emergency Room*), which brings regularly a cathartic discharge to the needy modern audience. *ER* represents the powerful ritual of restoration of the collective body by saving its vital parts—individual lives. The ritual healing takes place in the series on various symbolic levels, in both the physical and emotional sense.

[35] The recent controversial "trial of the century" exposed the disintegration of the collective body (and the Collective Body) during the process, after and beyond the O.J. Simpson trial, on levels previously hidden for the collective understanding. The trial happened to reveal for American culture some unhealthy processes within the collective body of the nation that tends to identify itself as a whole.

[36] Canada's own problem with Quebec's desire for separation reflects and brings to attention unresolved conflicts on the deep level of the national collective body.

[37] On the discussion of these matters, see, for example, Ian Watt, *Myth of Modern Individualism; Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan, Robinson Crusoe* (Cambridge, 1996).

[38] One can also add here Durkheim's *conscious collective* and John Donne's "no man is an island." On theoretical aspects of philosophical metaphors—'root metaphors' and 'dominant symbols'—and on their function in culture, see Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors,* and Sherry B. Ortner "On Key Symbols" in *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach,* eds. William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vost (New York, 1979). On Western concepts close to the idea of the Collective Body, see Anesa Miller-Pogasar "Recovering Traditions for a New Cultural Era," in *Re-Entering the Sign.* Miller-Pogasar discusses ideas of Western biologists, such as Gaia hypothesis, which views the entire earth as a single living organism; the theory of universal common ancestry through an ancient "mitochondrial Eve"; and the notion of "specieshood," as a category that might surpass ethnicity and nationality as a common identity for all

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people.

[39] In terms of Durkheim's opposition "organic—mechanic unity," the inner structure of community in communist and socialist social models may be considered "mechanic," while the Collective Body manifests a type of organic unity. Margaret Thatcher stated that "there is no such thing as society." Roy Armes quotes her in his work on Western mythology of the individual as manifested in the Hollywood culture: "In the Hollywood movie there are only individuals who make choices and act upon them. These choices and actions have consequences which flow logically from them and, in essence, a human being is a sum of his or her individual choices and actions." See Armes, *Action and Image,* 10.

[40] Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers* (New York, 1979), 223.

[41] These alternative contexts of Bakhtin's philosophy are defined by various Bakhtin researchers as religious, ideological and scientific "fundamentalism" (Crapanzano), and "hurrah-collectivism" (Shevchenko). On the former, see Vincent Crapanzano, "The Postmodern Crisis: Discourse, History, Memory," in *Bakhtin in Contexts.* On the latter, see A. K. Shevchenko, *Kul'tura. Istoriia. Lichnost'. Vvedenie v filosofiiu postupka* (Culture, History, Personality: Introduction to the Philosophy of Action) (Kiev, 1991), 3. More on his interpretation of Bakhtin, see Caryl Emerson, "Introduction: Dialogue on Every Corner, Bakhtin in Every Class," 1. According to Emerson, Shevchenko places Bakhtin among other European thinkers, from Aristotle and Augustine to Heidegger and Berdyaev, who have produced typologies of responsible action in the world. The divisions of the book by Shevchenko are: I. "Virtuous Man," II. "Juridical Man." III. "Metaphysical Man," and IV. "The Meaning of History and the Problem of the Utopian in Culture."

[42] "The hero's love is not valuable in itself; it serves only to aid him in fulfilling his tasks and in attaining "consciousness." On the issue of love in Stalinist culture, see Clark, *The Soviet Novel,* 182-83. For understanding of the crystallization of Bakhtin's concept of the Collective Body, I find the studies of the dimensions: 'Bakhtin and hunger' and 'Bakhtin and terror' in Soviet historical reality by Turbin and Ryklin extremely important. See observations by V.N. Turbin, Bakhtin's disciple and secretary for 12 years, on the connection between Bakhtin's theory of carnival and mass hunger, which he encountered many times and has experienced himself almost all his life. V.N. Turbin, *Carnaval: Religion, Politics, Theosophy* (in Russian) in *Bakhtinskii sbornik* (Bakhtinian Collection), No 1, 1990. Bakhtin has witnessed the destruction and convulsions of the starving people's collective body in Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, during revolution, Stalin years, in exile, after the war, etc., during the 1920-60s. Bakhtin was constantly starving himself, according to Turbin, almost until he was allowed to relocate to Moscow in the late 1960s. In addition to the dimension of hunger in Bakhtin's historical reality, another researcher, Ryklin discusses the dimension of political violence with respect to Bakhtin's theory of carnival. See, M.K. Ryklin, *The Bodies of Terror: Notes on the Logic of Violence* (in Russian) in *Bakhtinskii sbornik* (Bakhtinian Collection), No 1, 1990. It is important to remember that in 1929 for his political ideas, Bakhtin was sentenced to be

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sent to the concentration camp Solovki, which was equal to death. Miraculously, the sentence was changed at the last moment for exile, where Bakhtin spent almost all his life.

[43] According to Mandelker, "Bakhtin seems to belong to the political "other" of both Western and Soviet society." See her "Logosphere and Semiosphere," 180.

[44] See, Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors,* 47.

[45] Turner defines his notion of *communitas* as "an unstructured or rudimentary structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus,* community, or even communion of equal individuals," 96. Also: "communitas is a relationship between concrete, historical, idiosyncratic individuals," "a direct, immediate and total confrontation of human identities," 131-132. In other passages he links communitas with spontaneity and freedom versus structure, linked with obligation, jurality, law, constraint, and so on. See Turner, *The Ritual Process.* The distinction between the communitas and Collective Body maybe additionally explained in the following terms: *communitas* is a homogeneous, de-differentiating system, oriented towards equality and the present; the past is automatically re-created/represented within the present as the initial "heaven state" achieved by the utopia of equality; the future has no distinction from the present. The chronotope is achronic: it reactivates the mythological "frozen time." The Collective Body is a heterogeneous, (highly) differential (and differentiating) system, oriented toward the proper performance of the Collective Body's diverse functions by its appropriate parts; it is oriented towards the future, and is very preoccupied with the proper communication between the present and the past: the voices of the ancestors should be heard, and it does not happen automatically. The chronotope of the Collective Body is diachronic: the relationship between the past, present and future is multidirectional and controversial; the future may not take place automatically, if the present does not receive a sacred message from the past.

[46] With respect to the issues of freedom and equalness, central for Turner, it is in the element of carnival, which is based on the actions of *rodovoe telo* as a collective protagonist, where the antihierarchical mode is manifest, according to Bakhtin. Although Turner's and Bakhtin's concepts are very similar—*communitas* and *rodovoe telo,* liminality and carnival—they are not equivalent.

[47] A metaphor (in particular a philosophical or a root metaphor), as Turner defines it, is a "*prajñā*-artifact," while a system of categories derived from it would be "*vijñāna*-artifact," Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors,* 48.

[48] See, Suzuki Daisetz Teitaro, quoted by Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors,* 48.

[49] Fedorov's ideas of *rodovaia forma* (the genus/kinship form) are relevant to the discussion of Bakhtin's *rodovoe telo*: "Accepting that *rodovaia forma* is most archaic, tribal, primitive, savage and childish, we nevertheless have to admit its crucial advantage over the most developed and juridical forms. *Rodovaia forma* in its ideal, i.e. projective [modelling] principle is the type of association which is based on the immanent power of deep affection, without an external constrain and violence. This is a principle given to us in the image of Trinity. In reality, the kinship form could not have such an ideal perfection as manifested

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in Trinity." Fedorov, *Sochineniia,* 35. Fedorov makes here a very important point, anticipating discussions on Bakhtin's *rodovoe telo.* The latter is a model, a correcting device rather than utopia or social project. It is essentially a modelling system, whose meaning is manifest in the constant ritual creating and re-creating of the vital and effective (symbolic) community. Thus, as early as in Fedorov's nineteenth-century philosophy (which preceded the tragic mistakes of twentieth-century social practice), the idea, or more exactly, the ideal of kinship element, was given the meaning of principle and model. It is important to stress that Bakhtin's Collective Body should also be treated not in terms of utopia but as a modelling system intended to improve a socio-cultural process.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid., 49.

[52] The necessary mediatory stage of this kind of analysis—discussion of the group as protagonist—takes place in a number of works. See, for example, works by Northrop Frye, or more recently Armes, *Action and Image.*

[53] See, for example, *Problemy Poetiki Dostoevskogo* (Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics) (Moscow, 1979) and *The Dialogical Imagination,* trans. Mikhael Holquist, ed. Caryl Emerson and Mikhael Holquist (Austin, 1981).

[54] Various researchers have approached the problem of the collective body from different viewpoints. Without defining or emphasizing it, they however offer invaluable observations on how it functions in culture in general, and within certain narrative structures, especially of the mythological type, in particular. See, for example, Clark, *The Soviet Novel.* Regarding the manifestation of the Collective body in process and action, the works by Turner on ritual should be mentioned as the most theoretically important, stimulating and challenging. Propp's narrative/ritual models correlate with Bakhtin's models and are other examples of how the Collective body can be incarnated and actualized in the narrative structure. See more on this matter in his books *Morphology of the Fairy Tale,* and *Historical Roots of the Fairy Tale* (the latter, on the ritual origin of folklore motifs, has not been translated into English, and therefore is poorly known in the West). On the Collective Body and Russian history, see my "Find the Magic Word" in *Re-Entering the Sign: Articulating New Russian Culture.*

[55] See, Richard M. Berrong, *Rabelais and Bakhtin: Popular Culture in 'Gargantua and Pantagruel'* (Lincoln, Nebraska and London, 1986).

[56] See, for example, Ryklin on postmodernity: "Perhaps, we witness a yet unseen form of decadence, which has nothing to do with the personality—the decadence of the collective bodies, escalating according to their energetic exhaustion. These bodies are experiencing the nostalgia for unrealized acts of violence; overstressed, they transform violence into performance." Ryklin, "The Bodies of Terror," 71.

[57] For more on the ideology of postmodernism, see, for example, Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (New York, 1988) and *The Politics of Postmodernism* (New York, 1989), as well as Jean

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Baudrillard, *Selected Writings* (Cambridge, 1988), *Fatal Strategies* (New York, 1990) and *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (London, 1993).

[58] For more on the composite protagonist, see Linda Hutcheon, *Narcissic Narrative: Metafictional Paradox* (Waterloo, 1980).

# Chapter 2. The Semiotics of Ritual: The Ritual Action

This part discusses selected paradigms of ritual theory, essential for developing the anthropology of cinema and understanding the semiosphere of the Collective Body.[1] The previous chapter was intended to prepare the discussion of the questions: Whose ritual it is?; To whom does the ritual belong?; If it is a program, then whose?; Who creates, directs, orchestrates ritual?; Who "makes" people perform rituals, repeating them all over again and passing them from generation to generation? For the religious mind, the answer is simple—god(s). Others may say: authorities, power groups, tradition, shamans, etc. Various anthropologists defined the subject of ritual differently. Turner, for example, referred to the community as a subject of the ritual process. However, if we add to Turner's concept of community Bakhtin's notion of Great Time, then in the context of semiotic anthropology and Bakhtin's cultural theory one may define a true subject of ritual as the Collective Body.

The ritual protagonist—Collective Body—can be represented as a community in its collective immortality, along the scale of evolution. It is the elusive symbolic "entity," which is difficult to grasp on a purely rational level, that "initiates" and "rules" ritual performance, as well as coordinates ritual processes in culture. As an integral protagonist of the ritual process, the Collective Body paradoxically combines in one symbolic image both the Initiating and the Initiated, the giver and the receiver of sacred knowledge. The latter represents the mind of the Collective Body, and its transmission—the most essential mental action of *rodovoe telo.* The semiotics of ritual benefits from the notion of the Collective Body and is clarified in its philosophical context. As a multidimensional and polyphonic formation, it is a form of collectivity which is present simultaneously in different points of history, representing the perspective of Great Time. The following part of the thesis is intended to show the importance of the Collective Body concept for ritual studies, and its role as a subject of ritual. Part I of the dissertation introduces a number of concepts and reinterprets some of the existing terms in the context of the conceptual system generated by mutual reflections of Bakhtin's and Turner's theories. New terminology proposed in the dissertation is intended as a system of bridges and "windows of possibilities" for researchers in interdisciplinary cultural studies rather than a coded language of semiotic anthropology as a single discipline.

**Organic Metaphors and the Symbolic Construction of Community.** The aim and innovation of this study is in introducing Bakhtin's concept of the Collective Body and in incorporating it into already existing theories of culture, ritual and film. By doing so, this research emphasizes some dimensions of existing theories and widens the scope of discussions of ritual and cinema. Bakhtin did not invent the Collective Body notion. Truly as the "initiating", he brilliantly articulated and (ritually) channeled the semiosphere of the Collective Body—already present in culture as a form of hidden sacred knowledge—into the realm of modern cultural philosophy. As was mentioned above, the Collective Body is not an artificial theoretical construct projected by the modern philosopher onto the past and present of culture, but the way people thought and felt about themselves, a "genetic code of culture," in Turner's terms. Notions based on organic metaphors, similar to the Collective Body, have been determining the self-consciousness of society and culture for thousands of years.[2] It is no surprise that in the writings by anthropologists, and in various manifestations of folk or mass culture, before or independently from Bakhtin, one constantly meets representations of the Collective Body expressed in various ways. One can see further from Turner's texts how logically Bakhtin's concept of the Collective Body fits both anthropological theories and ritual consciousness, in particular the conceptualizations of community by primitive societies.

> The use of an aspect of human physiology as a model of social, cosmic, and religious ideas and processes is a variant of a widely distributed human theme: that the human body is a microcosm of the universe. The body may be pictured as androgynous, a male or female, or in terms of... its developmental stages, as child, mature adult, and elder... Whatever the mode of representation, the body is regarded as a sort of symbolic template for the communication of *gnosis,* mystical knowledge about the nature of things and how they came to be what they are.[3]

The conceptualization of society in terms of natural symbols and organic metaphors can be found in the works of many anthropologists, from Spencer to the scholars of our time, such as Turner, Ortner, Douglas and, for example, the authors of two recent collections, *Fragments for the History of the Human Body* (1989) and *Religious Reflections on the Human Body* (1995).[4] Mary Douglas in her *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* stresses that the social body often constrains the way the physical body is perceived. The physical experience of the body, always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society. She points out that there is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experience so that each reinforces the categories of the other.[5] "The physical body is a microcosm of society, facing the centre of power, contracting and expanding its claims in direct accordance with the increase and relaxation of social pressures. Its members, now riveted into attention, now abandoned to their private devices, represent the members of society and their obligations to the whole."[6] But as Douglas stresses,

> The physical body can have universal meaning only as a system which responds to the social system, expressing it as a system. What it symbolizes naturally is the relation of parts of an organism to the whole. Natural symbols can express the relations of an individual to his society at that general systemic level. The two bodies are the self and society: sometimes they are so near as to be almost merged; sometimes they are far apart. The tension between them allows the elaboration of meanings.[7]

The conceptualization of the physical body in the context of the social system has a connection to the way in which ritual consciousness perceives the community. The latter is often signified as both the body of a human being and a body of god. For the ritual mind "the worship of God is worship of the community... the assembly appears as a form of the Deity... The community, the assembly—has a sense of special sanctity from which individual and household sanctity is derived."[8]

Natural symbols and organic metaphors of the social body are closely associated with what Anthony Cohen emphasized for general anthropological theory as *The Symbolic Construction of the Community* (1985)—a conception especially important for semiotic anthropology, the semiotics of ritual and the anthropology of cinema.[9] In a concerted study of boundaries, symbols and their meanings, Cohen emphasizes the symbolic aspects of the social existence of communities. His major concern is how their symbolic uses are creative of 'community' identity. He sets out and reconsiders the notion of community by exploring how it is used, defined, classified, spoken of and lived by those who invest the term and its organic reality with symbolic importance. Cohen's book was warmly met by other professionals in the field of cultural anthropology.[10] In studying the community, Cohen stresses the following: a) the way it is constructed; b) 2) the way it is perceived and understood by its members; and c) 3) the way it makes people become members. The fundamental aspect of the community, emphasizes Cohen, is the sense of 'belonging': "We do not have to construe community just in terms of locality but rather in terms of belonging."[11] For Cohen, the sense of belonging is a socially constructed cultural phenomenon. Community is such a social and cultural world where one learns, practices to be 'social.' Community is greater than kinship but more immediate than the construction we call society. In other words, it is the milieu where culture is transmitted, horizontally, from peers to peers; and vertically, from elders to youth. "When we speak of people acquiring culture, or learning to be social, we mean that they acquire the symbols which will equip them to be social. It is like vocabulary: words give the capacity to communicate with other people, but do not tell them what to communicate."[12] Communities, thus, according to Cohen, are important repositories of symbols, whether in the forms of totems, football teams or war memorials.

Cohen's conception of the symbolic construction of the community is very important for understanding Bakhtin's Collective Body. But why, according to Cohen, it is so important to view community as a symbolic rather than a social construction? Cohen's discussion of interpretation of the community by the Chicago school clarifies the points of his departure from the perspective of this tradition. The Chicago school, Durkheimian in orientation, was based on the studies of Robert Park, Redfield and Oscar Lewis and focused on the construction of community primarily in the context of its social function. Cohen emphasizes that community is not social but a mental construct: "Community can no longer be adequately described in terms of institutions, for now we recognize it as symbol to which its adherents impute their own meanings."[13] Thus, it is the issue of the symbolic construction of the community that determines to a great extent the essence of such notions as community, ritual and the problematics of semiotic anthropology in general.

One more theorist should be mentioned in the context of the study of the community—Radcliffe-Brown.[14] His works are especially important for understanding the interconnection of such concepts as ritual and community. He stressed their profound mutual interrelation and accented that ritual's primary goal as the integration of the community—this notion is essential for our study of film-ritual and the function of film culture in the symbolic construction of the community.

In the context of the symbolic construction of community (as a socio-semantic and cultural practice), as well as its conceptualization in anthropology, a legitimate question can be asked concerning the difference between the community and Bakhtin's Collective Body. *Rodovoe telo* is a symbolic construction rather than a material object, and it refers to the whole genus rather than a group of contemporaries. Its distinction from an actual social 'community' lies in its three major characteristics which can be expressed in the three key words—flesh, Great Time and matrix identity. First, Bakhtin's Collective Body is fleshy, it emphasizes both the physical and spiritual as an inseparable whole. Second, it is connected with and via Great Time—the life span of the genus; Bakhtin's symbolic community *rodovoe telo* is maintained by means of Great Time. Third, it has a quality of the matrix identity: the Collective Body is an integral body manifesting many in one, without reducing difference to sameness. Deliberations on these issues are to be found further in the text.

**The Collective Body: Ritual Subject and Ritual Action.** Defined as a primary subject (protagonist) of ritual, the Collective Body has a meaning of both an *object* and a *process.* As an object, it integrates a material dimension, although spread across time—the Collective Body of all: fathers, mothers, ancestors and progeny who live, eat, die, procreate—and a symbolic dimension—an abstraction, a notion, a metaphor, which functions in culture as a directing symbol, which generates a dynamic system of signifiers.

It is precisely the sphere of ritual wherein the Collective Body manifests itself as a process: the process of the symbolic construction of community which never ends. The Collective Body integrates the process of living of all the living, but reveals itself as a collective identity, an integral whole in the moments of conjunction of the individual body with the Collective Body—the rites of passage. It is precisely Turner's method of processual symbolic analysis that would facilitate a study of the Collective Body as a "ritual symbol-in-action" and that would help to clarify the Collective Body in its processual mode. Ritual can be defined as a processual and transformative function of the Collective Body, providing its autocatalytic chain of reactions, its inner energy of self-transformation and thus constituting preservation and development of the Collective Body in time.

If Bakhtin determined what can be defined as the subject of ritual, a *ritual subject*, Turner explored what happened in the ritual, what can be defined as its inner process—a *ritual action*. Both concepts and conceptions of the two cultural philosophers complement each other as a verb and an accordant noun within one cultural sentence—a ritual performance. Thus, together they represent a grammatical structure of ritual, emphasizing the Collective Body as the integral ritual protagonist, and a symbolic action as an immanent process of ritual activity. It is important to stress that the concept of ritual which is used in this study omits the variable mode, or classification of diverse rituals. It rather refers to ritual as a *root paradigm* of human activity.[15] In other words, there are rituals and there is *the ritual*. Turner defined "the ritual" as a root paradigm which belongs to the semantic class of "total patterns." They "represent the goals of man as a species, where they prevail over particular interests—the general good over the individual welfare."[16]

Bakhtin's Collective Body concept may best be explained in Turner's terms as a root paradigm and as a ritual symbol—"the smallest unit of ritual which still retains the specific properties of ritual behavior; symbols are "objects, activities, relationships, events, gestures, and spatial units in a ritual situation," so is the Collective Body.[17] Bakhtin's concept could not be completely understood as a root paradigm and a dominant ritual symbol without contextualization within Turner's ritual theory, with its revolutionary reinterpretation of ritual symbol as a process, a behavioral act—something that allows further deliberations in respect to the semiotic anthropology of cinema. Turner changed the conception of ritual and marked a shift in ritual studies from a positivist to dialectical understanding of symbols in cultural processes. This revolution in anthropological theory was parallel and commensurate to Bakhtin's and the poststructuralist shift in semiotics from meanings as objects to meanings as processes. Turner stressed that symbols in ritual are not just "frozen cultural meanings" (in terms of Eisenstein-Ivanov's semiotics), but actions and processes that effectively regulate many spheres of life. These processes are exactly what the Collective Body represents, and it is through them in the first place that the Collective Body manifests itself in dramatic forms of cinema. Turner's innovative discovery of the processual nature of ritual symbols, and the very understanding of ritual as a cultural process in general revealed the method of processual symbolic analysis as essential for the investigation of ritual symbolism in processual forms of cinema. Without Turner's methodological innovations the very subject and method of this study—the semiotic anthropology of cinema—could not be possible.

The Collective Body is the inspiration behind the ritual system. Thus, Collective Body imagery constantly manifests itself in culture in every possible way. Rites cannot exist in a vacuum, be it religious, aesthetic or formalist. As Hardin pointed out, rituals require "the context of community. We do not invent the great ceremonies of our culture but, rather, come to them as parts of a whole."[18] This "whole," or the "context of community" in Turner's and Hardin's terms, is best expressed in the originality of Bakhtin's concept. The ritual and the Collective Body manifest an inseparable whole. The ritual context is essentially the context of the Collective Body, and vice versa. The ritual context has historically formed as the most effective means to realize the Collective Body in an organizing process, while the driving force of ritual, its ultimate "author" and "performer," (metaphorically speaking) is the Collective Body.

Rituals express the mode of the Collective Body's self-organization, which facilitates human relationship in the direction of equality, trust, help, protection, feeding and nurturing, sexuality and birth-giving, caring for the young and elderly, mastering traditions and modeling the future, by passing through generations the most essential "sacred" knowledge. Ritual essentially expresses the modality of Great Time and the immortal community; the notions of "invented" or "personal" rituals, as Grimes correctly pointed out, are contradictions in terms.[19] The Collective Body-metaphor might be referred to as utopia (in terms of its material realization). But in its capacity as a modeling system, it manifests itself as an organizing root-paradigm, which is ultimately necessary for survival of humankind as a whole. Turner stressed that ritual is a purely communal act; it momentarily, and we may add, spontaneously, achieves a "condition of communitas": during the ritual state the bonds are "anti-structural" in relation to the social/political organization, in this they are "undifferentiated, equalitarian, direct..."[20] For the further discussion of Soviet cinema, it is important to emphasize that the Collective Body is not associated with power, society, structure, but rather with antistructure, communitas, biological and spiritual survival. Turner stressed that in tribal society communitas is associated with physical fertility.[21] The paradigm of the Collective Body is indeed a manifestation of the tribal *mythology of fertility*; but it is much more. It functions as a dominant symbolic system, not only representing but also organizing aspects of behavior associated with survival, fertility, procreation, creation and with the transmission of the knowledge vital for the collective survival. It functions as a model in both aspects emphasized by Geertz as a *model of* and a *model for* birth-giving and life continuation of humankind.[22] The very concept of the Collective Body, originated within the self-reflexivity of the "tribal community," illustrates how, in the words of Turner, "organic processes and the seasonal round provide root-metaphors for cultural processes."[23] In the context of modern culture, the Collective Body's main significance as a root metaphor is in its facilitation of the re-orientation of an individual towards the community and his re-identification within the collective "whole."

**Ritual and Religion.** To comprehend film as a ritual structure, the distinctive /complementary mode of comparative analysis should be introduced.[24] The fundamental distinction between ritual and religion is that religion is a system of beliefs, while ritual is the system of actions. Characteristically, the Collective Body may be defined as both: a mythology and ritual, a system of beliefs and system of actions. The two spheres intersect in many ways: ritual is based on myth and religion (belief in the supernatural), and religion organizes/expresses itself through ritual actions. As essentially a system of beliefs, religion places the human being in a predominantly passive mode, while ritual makes the action, or active mode, a necessity.

It is necessary to emphasize that the concept of religion discussed below does not represent religion in general, but rather a type of organized religion characteristic of Russian historical tradition inherited from that of tenth-eleventh century Byzantium.[25] For these cultures and historical periods religion was manifested in a *hyperstructure*, an organized form consolidated within the state. As such, religion represents a **preservative** /conservative mode, while ritual, according to Turner, is essentially a **transformative** action. Although any national film culture is a carrier of the ritual mode as an heir of ritual performance, the ritual modality in Soviet cinema with its ability to unite and reintegrate, forming the larger circle of the initiation, is especially significant. In a country like Russia (and the Soviet Union), where religion had been traditionally associated with the official ideology and official culture (in Bakhtin's terms), the sphere of unofficial culture was largely manifest in non-religious forms of ritual and cultural activity. Thus, the whole sphere of integrative rituals was left outside organized religions and had in its would have to find its own sphere of the search for sacred knowledge, which in Russia has been maintained via the realm of literature and (film)art. This explains the traditional "priesthood of Russian intelligentsia" (in Clark's terms), and Soviet antitotalitarian artists' role as the "sacred instructors."[26] As a key issue for study of ritual modalities in Soviet cinema, and as an example of semiotic-anthropological method, ritual and religion are discussed in a system of binary oppositions and complimentarities in the table below:

| **Ritual** | **Religion** |
|---|---|
| System of actions | System of beliefs |
| Associates with the community | Associates with the state |
| A function of the community | A function of the state |
| Re-integrates the Collective Body (in Bakhtin's terms) | Re-integrates the body of power /state |
| Antihierarchical, or establishes a new hierarchy | Hierarchical, or reinforces the established hierarchy |
| Performance | Service |
| Relationship with deities:<br>Influence, Interaction<br>Cooperation | Relationship with deities:<br>Dependence, Hope,<br>Subordination |
| Active mode | Passive mode |
| Transformative mode | Preservative mode |
| Concept of time:<br>circular /mythological | Concept of time:<br>linear /historical |
| Use of disintegrative mode:<br>temporary death,<br>*dying from* and *dying to* | Use of incorporative mode:<br>baptism, missionary<br>*being born* for/in God |
| Model of metamorphosis:<br>development via change | Model of joining:<br>development via growth |
| Re-integration into the community in a new status | Holy communication, administer to sacrament |
| Constant change of status | Established status |

| **Ritual** | **Religion** |
|---|---|
| Carnal, fleshy | Bodiless, spiritual |
| Singing, dancing | Word, silence |
| Movement, dynamics | Standing, Stasis |
| Blending the individual into the group, tribe, community | Blending the individual with God |
| Polytheism | Monotheism |
| Conception of space: margins integrate into the centre | Conception of space: established center(s): god, church |
| Sacred and profane: interchangeable | Sacred and profane: fixed |

It is important to stress that the present study refers not to all kinds of ritual, and not to religious ritual, but to specifically pre-religious forms of ritual activity which gave birth to the performing genres. These rites are manifest in modern culture in various forms, particularly via media and cinema.

**Initial Event: Ritual as Model *of/for* Creation.** Leach emphasized that it is characteristic of many ritual sequences that the "actors claim to be recapitulating the creation of the world"—the moment of "primordial" or, in terms of this study, "initial event."[27] The significance of this event, and its endless recapitulation, reiteration, reproduction in the ritual process was explored by Mircea Eliade and Margaret Mead. Characteristically, in this context Mead defines ritual as: "the repetition of those symbols which evoke the feeling of that primordial event which initially called the community into being with such power that it effects our presence at that event—in other words, represents the primordial event."[28] The issue of initial event was also touched upon in Geertz's theorization of ritual as a *model of* and *model for*. Geertz stressed that the term "model" has two senses—an "of" sense and "for" sense." Theory is a *model for* reality. It is also the case for psychological and social systems and for cultural models, which we would not ordinarily refer to as "theories," but rather as "doctrines," "melodies," or "rites." The *models of* are "linguistic, graphic, mechanical, natural, etc., processes which function" is "not to provide sources of information in terms of which other processes can be patterned, but to represent those patterned processes as such, to express their structure in an alternative medium."[29]

> The perception of the structural congruence between one set of processes, activities, relations, entities, etc., and another set for which it acts as a program, so that the program can be taken as a representation, or conception—a symbol—of the programmed, is the essence of human thought. The inter-transportability of models *for* and models *of,* of which symbolic formulation makes possible, is the distinctive characteristic of our mentality.[30]

Following Geertz, ritual may be defined as the both a "model of" and a "model for." This corresponds with Turner's notions of the liminal stage of ritual: "dying from" (disintegrating with(in) an obsolete model of the world) and "dying for" (implying, reaching for, converging with another one, coming into being). The Collective Body and the ritual as symbolic processes have features of both. Bakhtin's Collective Body is characteristically a model *of* and model *for* birth-giving and life continuation. Further elaborating Geertz's conceptualization of symbols, Ortner proposed the following binary oppositions: summarizing symbols vs. elaborating symbols; root metaphors /orientation for conceptualization vs. key scenarios /strategies for action.[31]

Key symbols are defined by Ortner in terms of "how they act upon or are manipulated by cultural actors." Key scenarios, as Ortner put it, are culturally valued in that they formulate the culture's basic means-ends relationship in actable forms.[32] Key scenarios, in the context of the Collective Body, are those which would successfully fulfill the Collective Body's ultimate goals. According to Ortner, key symbols, can transform into key scenarios when the author/performer creates "cultural performances," in which values, states and effective means for achieving them are dramatized for all to see.[33] The ultimate aim of the film scholar who is developing an interdisciplinary study of film and ritual is to determine which films function as key scenarios in a given society, effectively employing and elaborating key symbols of the given culture. The Collective Body paradoxically functions as summarizing and elaborating symbol, as a root metaphor and orientation for conceptualization, as well as a key scenario and strategy for action. Altogether, the Collective Body, in a symbolic stasis and symbolic process, unfolds as a dynamic multidimensional signifying system inside the culture; the investigation of Soviet cinema will represent and explore these complex semantic processes.

Conceptualizations of ritual as a model and program was also explored in the works by Horton and Rappaport.[34] The Soviet tradition of semiotic anthropology, seen especially in the works of Lotman and Ivanov, has emphasized modelling systems in culture and the mode of programming in the ritual action.[35] The development of this approach—the focus on the initial event as reenactment—has a vital importance for understanding the very nature of drama and cinema.[36] The most important distinction between ritual and religion is to be revealed through the activating mode of ritual—that of **recreation, re-enactment** of the **initial event** and of the sacred mythology of beginnings. The specifics of the ritual chronotope is determined by the mode of reenactment. The 'ritual man' is essentially an extremely active and responsible being: he *must* act, *must* perform the ritual—otherwise he jeopardizes the very order of things, the cosmological order. In comparison, the 'religious man' is required to live his life obeying the rules and following established morality; his bad deeds jeopardize only his own personal survival; the rest is the responsibility of the authorities and of God. The 'ritual man' is obliged to initiate a ritual action since it is 'physically' (in a metaphorical /mythological sense) connected with re-creating the cosmological order /universe and the well-being of the whole world. Ritual is an active modelling system; its world is in a constant stage of recreation and coming into being. In religion the model is a given: the world has been created and established forever. In religion, the concept of time represents the *originated time*; in ritual it is the *originating time*. In religion, the cosmological model is already granted initially by god(s), and it should not and could not be influenced or changed by human activity. The ritual action models and re-models the cosmos constantly, and the '*cinematic man,*' an heir of the "ritual man," as a new shaman—the initiating—is responsible for the constituency of this modelling function. This is why action becomes so important in ritual; it becomes an ultimate way to maintain the order of things. And that is why the '*cinematic man*' (filmmaker) reproduces, reconstructs reality, as an agent of the ritual function of cinematic process. He inevitably intrudes, annoys, provokes the inhabitants of the 'established reality,' initiating all kinds of re-creative actions, which have ritual transformative meaning for the audience /community (on the level of story) and reality /cosmos (on the level of imagery and structure). For the ritual mind, any immorality or other violation of human rules would lead not only to the disgrace of a single bad person, but would have cosmological consequences: disruption of the very order of things and imbalance of the cosmic equilibrium. This explains why the ritual man could not have been a passive witness, but, constantly intruding into other people's lives, tried to maintain or re-establish the cosmic order in each matrix-like particle of social life. In other words, religious man's passivity *may possibly* jeopardize his personal survival, while ritual man's passivity (nonperformance of rituals) *would necessarily* jeopardize his entire world. The '*cinematic man*' (and its modalities—the clown—ritual fool, the filmmaker—shaman, the spectator—initiand, and the Collective Body—the film audience as an integral whole) inherits and, therefore, remains in charge of this modelling/recreating function of film-ritual.

In this sense, not making movies is equivalent to not-performing the rituals. The world should be re-created constantly, the modelling/remodelling function should be performed. Performing ceremonies (ideologized, myth-making, conformist films, genre-cliché films, and also late postmodern films) instead of rituals—will go against the ritual/transformative need of society, and that of the individual, satisfying the social moment instead of the social process, and thus damaging the re-creative mode of the Universe. This explains how cinema, as a 'magic model,' forms its own Cosmology and connects by invisible strings with the whole *world*, and with the *wholeness* of the world.

It is necessary to emphasize, however, that the comparative analysis of ritual and related notions (for example, religion) in a binary mode is a conditional intermediate method.[37] In the strictest sense these cannot be compared as two oppositions within one semantic row. Rather they should be seen as one form genetically preceding another: ritual preceding religion. The syncretic unity of ritual (as integral protostructure) disintegrates later into religion, philosophy and art. Therefore, religion and ritual relate to each other not in terms of oppositions, polar systems, but in terms of historical dichotomy, representing different stages in the development of one phenomenon. They become oppositions when forms of ritual and religion historically take different directions and functions at the same time in a given culture.

However, the important question remains: What does it mean when, simultaneously with the later stages—religion, philosophy, socio-regulative institutions (trial) and art as such (art for the sake of art)—modern culture still keeps and reproduces a ritual modality, preserving the earlier stage of development within the emergent system? The stage that should have disappeared survives, and is culturally evident and topical. It can only mean that: later stages/forms—religion, etc., in certain cultural systems (Byzantium, Russia)—do not provide for the well-being of the community and of the individual, especially in the context of their transformative/harmonizing needs, a necessary function which religion inherit from the ritual. The latest form, so to speak, ignores the inherited function. And ritual is preserved or revived within the culture, by cultural mechanisms, as a lost functional mode each time it did not receive proper compensation from other socio-psychological spheres. Metaphorically speaking, it reminds one of a situation when grandparents come out of retirement to bring up a child when the young parents for whatever reasons cannot do so. When modern institutions (religion, justice system, commercialization of cinema) consolidate with various types of *structure* and power, they lose their organic connection with the *communitas* (in Turner's terms) and the Collective Body. Then culture necessarily revives ritual modes to maintain the equilibrium between *structure* and *antistructure*, stasis and dynamics, stability and change.

**Ideology, Ritual and Ceremony.** Ceremony is exactly what many anthropologists considered to be ritual in pre-Turner ritual theory, and what many people outside anthropology misidentify with ritual even now.[38] Unlike ritual, myth and ceremony tend to ignore social dynamics and dramas. Moreover, they tend to present a social drama as a)unessential, b)nonexistent, or/and c)already overcome, resolved. Ceremony tries to replace a representation of social drama with a powerful representations of social consensus (often artificial, false); myth tends to replace drama's conflict resolution with a multiple conflict substitution. The social drama is then represented instead of resolved, and more exactly misrepresented. Myth is intended to displace an understanding of the authentic drama. It is very typical for a mythological structure to substitute an internal conflict with an external one—to transfer the epicenter of the conflict from the social centre to the periphery. The mode of conflict substitution is manifest in multiplicity—a repetition of action, a large quantity of victories over the mythological monsters, trouble makers for the Soviet regime. Thus, the intrinsic social drama of socialism would be endlessly replaced and represented by a substitution in its totality—villains' sabotage "around every corner" and multiple victories over the "enemies of the people" (who are certainly outsiders—spies, bourgeoisie, foreigners, intellectuals, etc.). In myth, instead of real drama, it is a matrix-set of multiple representations of ideologically correct artificial conflict (false resolutions of the substituted conflict) that determine the story. The latter may be called a simulacra of social drama, in Baudrilliard's terms, or a counterfeit of a true conflict, whose representation in art is prohibited. Thus, it is important to differentiate between the categories: film-ritual and film-ceremony, or film-myth (the latter two are the most typical for eras of cultural stagnation).

Representing opposite poles on the axis of 'transformation—preservation,' ritual on one hand as well as myth and ceremony on the other are not static. Yet Turner stressed that a ritual may gradually lose its transformative power and turn into a ceremony. In this case, ritual transmutes into an "ideologically correct" repetitive action, propagated as sacred by the group in power and perceived as sacred by the majority of participants. The degraded/transmuted ritual becomes a ceremony, determined by the purpose to preserve the authority of the established class/group (contrary to ritual, which is performed for the sake of the community). And vice versa—a ceremony in certain conditions may accumulate transformative mode and unexpectedly turn into a ritual.[39] Soviet political meetings in the schools, offices, institutions were initially designed as a ritual expression of the transformative "revolutionary spirit." They gradually mutated into formal ceremonies, which reinforced the established power structures. Therefore in reality one may find both ritual and ceremony in various stages of mutation into each other. Insofar as this process is relevant to social life, the dual vector of mutation is certainly reflected by cinema, manifested usually on the levels of film genre, theme, ideology and plot. Soviet film comedies of the 1930s that were supposed, by the logic of genre, to express a transformative carnival spirit, appeared to be a simulation of free laughter, a "strictly-permitted" ceremonial comism, a mockery of the politically correct targets.[40]

In addition to the dual process of mutation of oppositions into each other in social life, there is also a number of modes, which could be called counterfeit: yet, Turner pointed out that one can find a ceremony pretending to be a ritual, a ritual disguised as a ceremony, etc. This masking /posing of a cultural performance, its putting on of an appropriate ideological dress is especially characteristic for totalitarian societies. The problematic is also relevant to ritual in the postmodern context; insightful ideas on ceremony pretending to be real life are to be found in the writings of Baudrillard, for example, *Fatal Strategies* (1983). All multiple modes of ritual and ceremony mentioned above, as embodied in the social life, are also expressed in cinema and media, which reflect all the vibrations and deviations within the ritual-ceremony power field. Hollywood's myths which constantly pose as rituals are a well-known example. The French New Wave, which emerged from within the ideology of the 1960s, with its conscious breaking of established cinematic genre-codes is an example of ritual simulation of a ceremony for its constant exploitation of the transformative spirit. French filmmakers, artistically imitating the "ceremonial" so-called "papa's cinema", suddenly deconstructed it from the inside in their innovative films. Stalinist totalitarian cinema may be referred to as a myth pretending to be a ritual (as his counter-revolution was an imitation of the revolutionary progress, thus reflecting a sphere of experience). Clark's famous analysis of the Soviet novel as ritual, a pioneering study opened opportunities for others to use the ritual approach towards Soviet culture. In the context of new developments in ritual studies and post-Turner anthropological theory, a Soviet narrative may be presented now in a more complex way—ritual gradually transmuting into a ceremony, and ceremony posing as/pretending to be a ritual, rather than a ritual as such. Therefore, in considering a film-ritual in its socio-cultural context, the complex and dynamic nature of the ritual mode in respect to its margins and opposites should be stressed.

As Grimes emphasized, "ritual aspirations are notoriously easy prey for political, economic, and media exploitation."[41] Although the inner ideology of ritual is associated with the Collective Body, ritual is constantly being re-signified in various cultures for political ends. Thus the mechanisms of signification and resignification of ritual models by ideology are an important subject for research, in particular using on the material of film defined by Lenin as "the most important of all the arts" for political demagogy. The dialectics of ritual and ceremony, as a transformative/preservative modes of culture, and their efforts at mutual alteration become a condition for understanding film-ritual in the highly ideologized and politicized time of the Soviet era.[42] Turner investigated how rituals undermine the established ceremonial systems, which re-actualize the power of ruling groups. Brecht built his art theory on the presumption that modern (bourgeois, in his context) theatre completely degraded into the ceremonial mode, protecting the ideology of the groups in power. Thus, according to him, defamiliarizing (or, alienating) counter-strategies (A-effect) should be invented in order to return a performance in the state of true ritual. Brecht introduced and stressed the ideological/political dimensions of defamiliarization in addition to the aesthetic/gnoceological, which had been discovered and emphasized earlier by the Russian Formalists.

A (false) myth presented by the performance and embedded in it should be destroyed by the alienating effects of the covering/commenting ritual, providing purification of meanings and of the very ritual form of performance: the case of *Scorpion's Gardens*, to be discussed further in the thesis, is an illustration of a structural battle of the film-ritual with the ceremony within. Brecht or Althusser may have asked in the context of ritual and ideology: "Whose *sacra* it is?"; Whose "sacred instructions" are being transmitted in the course of the drama, and what these instruction make the people do in social reality?" Thus, a signification of the sphere of *sacra,* and the efforts of ritual to emphasize and define its place within the established semiosphere, has a profound ideological and political meaning and deserves to be stressed in the context of the semiotic anthropology of cinema. Although a true ritual is never about political power, and it contains no ideology, except that of the Collective Body, ritual meanings can easily be re-signified by ideology. For its modelling ability, ritual is a desirable catalyst in any political process. An extremely powerful weapon of psychological, spiritual and intellectual influence on the masses, ritual has become an object of intensive struggle between various political groups, which try to control culture and society; ideological struggle has become a cultural condition of ritual in the modern world. In the intersecting fields of ideology, ritual (a transformative formation) and ceremony (a preservative one) constantly transmute into each other, marking periods of social change and stagnation. These processes are vividly reflected in cinema and can be studied by means of films as cultural texts. As soon as it is taken over by an interest group, ritual immediately or gradually, but often invisibly for the masses (the invisibility of this process is the condition of its effectiveness), mutates into ceremony. However, even achieving the complete status of a ceremony, it continues to function as a ritual, persistently posing as such in the cultural space and faking/imitating a transformative mode, often in a very sophisticated ways (postmodernism). The groups in power, posing as the initiating, often insist on the role of being in charge of the culture's key ritual(s), while gradually transforming it into a ceremony that is intended to support the established system. Needless to say, the "sacred instructions" are custom-tailored, according to the interests of the power group. Then, when ritual has become highly and visibly politicized, it needs ideological self-purification, deconstruction and alienation, as stressed in Brecht's theory of performance. Then, a new group, often represented also by a group of artists (film or theatre enthusiasts) steps in and deconstructs the myth (ceremony pretending to be a ritual) by means of interrelated narratives. The dialectics of this transmutation can be presented in the following paradigm:

1. ritual
2. stagnating ritual
3. ritual mutating into a ceremony
4. ceremony pretending to be a ritual
5. ritual alienating itself from the (embedded) myth
6. ritual deconstructing a ceremony
7. ritual re-interpreting the system of ritual symbols (resignification, shift)
8. ritual sacralizing, signifying a system of new values—a new embedded myth

***

1. ritual functioning effectively
2. stagnating ritual
3. ritual mutating into a ceremony

And the cycle is repeated again. Therefore, when investigating film as ritual, we have to determine the location of any particular movie on the scale between the ritual and ceremony in the ideological and political space of culture. Further case studies of various films will show that not only certain stories, but also film genres, narrative types and artistic devices prevail at particular stages within the cycle, being closely connected—expressing and reinforcing it—with a certain ideological mode. For example, the Soviet totalitarian novel of the 1930-40s, studied by Clark, represents phases 2-4, while the antitotalitarian films of the 1960-90s to be discussed in this study, represents phases 5-7. The most recent films associated with the new constituting mythology of the post-Soviet society (of the so-called New Russians, just emerged bourgeoisie), may be referred to as the phase 8—establishing a new myth.

Interestingly, one narrative (or narrative motif) may circulate throughout the whole cycle—transmuting, according to the ideological agenda of a given historical stage. All these narratives are metatextually connected with one another, sometimes echoing the predecessor and sometimes opposing it. This ritual metatextual interaction may function as both mythologizing stratification (myth-making) or a counter-text (myth destroying); it depends on whether the following phase is intended to reinforce the ideology of the previous phase or to alter it. Thus, the circulation of the same ritual motif through the ideological cycles of history is associated with the issues of intertextuality, metatextuality and semantic counter-strategies of the story-tellers (directors, writers, etc.). In the context of the Collective Body study, the dialectics between the ritual and ceremonial modes in culture may be viewed as the dialectics and contradiction between the Collective Body agenda (preservation/restoration of its wholeness and vitality) and that of power groups (preservation /restoration of the hierarchy, dominance, unlimited political control, money, wars, etc.). The dialectics between ceremony and ritual reflects to some extent the dialectics between Bakhtin's oppositions "official—unofficial culture" and Turner's "structure—antistructure."

**The Collective Body in Processual Symbolic Analysis.**[43] The goal of symbolic anthropology as a form of modern philosophy may be defined as a response to society's need to redefine and restore neglected or forgotten modes of the Collective Body. Turner asked, how an anthropologist could justify his claim to be able to interpret a society's ritual symbols more deeply and comprehensively that the actors/participants of rituals themselves? He quoted Lewin on the understanding of society and its system of symbols as a "totality of coexisting social entities such as various kinds of groups, sub-groups, categories, or personalities, and also barriers between them, and modes of interconnexion."[44] Thus, from the perspective of the semiotics of culture, or semiotic anthropology of culture, every symbol is being considered as 1) a part of semiosphere (system of symbols and meanings), a part of the integral picture of a given culture; and 2) a function within the semiotic glossary of culture, a part of the macrocultural international system of meanings, archetypal paradigms of humankind. The need for an integral approach Turner supported by the following set of arguments.

> Each participant in the ritual views it from his own corner of observation... own "structural perspective." His vision is circumscribed by his occupancy of a particular position, both in the persisting structure of his society, and also in the role structure of the given ritual. Moreover, the participant is likely to be governed in his actions by a number of interests, purposes, and sentiments, depending upon his specific position, which impair his understanding of the total situation.[45]

The total situation should be evaluated not only from a social multiprospectible viewpoint, but—what is essential for this research—from the Collective Body's multiprospectible viewpoint. Turner stresses further the importance "to include within the total meaning of a dominant ritual symbol, aspects of behavior... which the actors themselves are unable to interpret, and of which they may be unaware."[46] The anthropologist, continues Turner, "isolating its organizational principles, and distinguishing its groups and relationship, has no particular bias and can observe the real interconnections and conflicts between groups and persons, in so far as these receive ritual representation. What is meaningless for an actor playing a specific role may well be highly significant for an observer and analysis of the total system." The "total situation" and the "total system" of the ritual process that Turner refers to can be interpreted as those of the Collective Body. Not only is an external observer capable of grasping the bigger picture than are the participants, but the researcher equipped with the notion of the Collective Body, is closer to an interpretation of ritual as a social moment of the Great Time of collective immortality, a segment of the "total situation," in which the Collective Body represents the "total" ritual system.

**Life-Crisis Rituals.** Throughout all his books, Turner specifically stressed the importance of life-crisis rituals, which deal with important points in the physical or social development of an individual, such as birth, puberty or death. The life-crisis rituals—rites of passage—are designed to mark the transitions from one phase of life or social status to another. Van Gennep's classical studies of the rites of passage and Turner's developments of these concepts explain how the Collective Body can be related to the very essence of ritual.[47] According to Turner, life-crisis rituals "not only concern the individuals on whom they are centered, but also mark **changes in the relationship of all the people** [emphasis added] connected with them by ties of blood, marriage, cash, political control, and in many other ways."[48] Thus, ritual functions as reorientation and reidentification of the community members within the Collective Body, as its living integral units. Life-crisis rituals refer to the Collective Body of a given people and are designed to re-arrange the relationships/distribution of functions within the Collective Body. The Collective Body rather than a single individual, is a true protagonist, a subject of the ritual, of the ritual process within the Great Time. The single individual's rites of passage are simultaneously the transformative passages for the Collective Body, representing the shifts within the whole Collective Body. "When a Ndembu woman bears her first child... she may be presenting her brother... with an heir, while husband becomes a father and her mother a grandmother, with all the changes in behavior and status involved in these new relationships."[49] Turner's example shows how the ritual situation marks the intrinsic development, a transformative process within the Collective Body—something that helps it to remain the whole/the one, as well as to undergo necessary changes/adjustments at the same time. The birth of a child is the child's rite of passage as an individual and, further, the change of status of the whole chain of people within the interrelated community. In Turner' words, the young mother's "society itself undergoes changes along with her own important passage from young wife to mother. Whatever society we live in we are all related to one another; our own "big moments" are "big moments" for others as well."[50]

**The Chronotope of Ritual.** Time in ritual is a crucial issue for understanding of time in cinema.[51] "Rites of passage, which are concerned with demarcating the stages in the human life cycles," stressed Leach, "must clearly be linked with some kind of representation or conceptualization of time."[52] Rituals help us "rise above personal and social limitations, even above time and space."[53] Ritual may be referred to as a special channel to various dimensions of time where distant and even alternative modes of time meet and interact. Ritual magic and cinematic "magic" are both essentially (in Tarkovsky's terms) the *sculpting in time.*[54]

Leach, in *Rethinking Anthropology,* introduced two concepts (and conceptualizations) of time in ritual and culture: he named them after the Greek Gods: Cronus (created, directed and irreversible time) and Chronos (eternal and reversible time).[55] The latter can also be related to Bakhtin's concept *bol'shoe vremia* (Big or Great time), which is a time span of the Collective Body. Both of Leach's concepts of time (Cronus and Chronos) represent creation, but in different ways. Cronus's moment of creation is completed. But it is still charged with creation, creative power; therefore it will be endlessly repeated due to the power of Chronos—eternal, reversible time. The chronotope of ritual characteristically and paradoxically unites both Cronus and Chronos, as well as Bakhtin's alternative conceptions— personal time and Great Time of the Collective Body. Keeping in mind Leach's classification of time, we will define below the chronotope of ritual (hereinafter "ritual chronotope"). Chronotope, a concept introduced by Bakhtin, literally means "time-space" and may be defined as a conceptualization of time/space, as well as a modality of their existence within a certain cultural form.[56]

Turner's concept of rituals as "big moments" in life cycles may also be connected to Bakhtin's notion of Big/Great Time in its opposition to/integration with Personal Time.

The capability of ritual to "reproduce" metaphorically and symbolically the initial event has the effect of the *concentrating time*, as if "all" time and space is focused around the ritual circle at the time and place of performance. It generates a special chronotope of performance/film screening, which places extraordinary weight on the given performative action and its meaning. In the middle of the ritual circle there is a centre, which possesses "magic," a highly transformative quality; a person or an object may function as a ritual epicenter signifying the pivotal point of the ritual space—time.[57] The ritual chronotope results from the modelling function of the ritual process; what happens at a given ritual performance will affect not only the entire future of the initiand-protagonist-spectator, but also the whole world. The concentration of time is achieved by the combination of the two temporal dimensions—Personal Time and Great Time—whose fields, metaphorically comparable to those of physics, increase the electromagnetic field in geometrical progression when they cross. The concentration of time in ritual action produces an explosion within the ritual circle, or a "tornado" of creative energy, determined by the status of ritual as an acting model. The ritual concentration and generation of time is connected with the ritual's metasemantic structure, which possesses specific matrix dimensions of time and space. In general, the ritual chronotope may be defined as a conceptualization and a condition of time and space with the following characteristics:

1) ritual expresses *Personal Time* (the initiand's life cycle);

2) ritual expresses *Great Time*—the Collective Body's life cycle;

3) ritual paradoxically connects, joins and integrates together the Personal and Great Time, manifesting *Parallel Time* and *Integrating Time*;

4) ritual is a focusing, time-catching, time-centering, time-intensifying phenomenon—it manifests the *Concentrating Time*;

5) ritual has creative/procreative ability—as a modelling system it manifests the *Generating* or *Originating Time*;

6) ritual is designed to reestablish the borders of time, to overcome the frames between incompatible realities; ritual appeals to the immortality of the Collective Body; ritual manifests a *Border-Crossing Time*;

7) ritual reestablishes, reinforces and intensifies the course and dynamics of the both—Personal and Great Time; as an autocatalytic process, ritual is *Activating* and *Accelerating Time.*

The last two characteristics are especially important with respect to the modelling function of ritual manifested in cinema. All the features of ritual chronotope, however, emphasize that it is through rituals that the Collective Body connects with individual lives, as well as realizing and developing itself through the changes wrought in the individual bodies. The latter two features are also connected with the function of the Collective Body: in the ritual moment, the Collective Body concentrates all its power and all its system of meaning into the act of transformation of one individual into the socio-biological and spiritual being designed to facilitate the Collective Body's ultimate goal. Modelling the very moment of Creation, ritual "creates" a new being and the whole world with it and for it. Thus, the ritual is essentially a point of reference for the Collective Body's existence and growth, a mode of its life continuation, the transmission of biological and psychological energy—life energy—and procreative—creative functions from one generation to another. The ritual as a phenomenon has much to do with the ambivalent and mysterious status of the Collective Body as the one, and also as many, as a presence in today—the modality of the present—as well as a presence in yesterday and tomorrow—the modalities of the past and the future.

**Great Time and The Collective Body.** The time dimension of ritual is inseparably connected with what Bakhtin defined as Great Time.[58] The latter can be also defined as the chronotope of the Collective Body. Manifesting the life time of the Collective Body, Great Time symbolically points at it. Ritual, as a mark in one person's life cycle, is simultaneously a mark in the life cycle of the Collective Body.[59] Ritual is the conjunction between the personal time of the initiand and Great Time—the life span of the Collective Body. The ritual chronotope is the signification of both, as well as of the interconnection between personal time and collective immortality. Personal time in ritual has a meaning as both a personal segment and an integral part of Great Time, while Great Time is composed of its integral parts—the units of personal time. The Collective Body does not exist without individual bodies, while the existence of the individual obtains (sacred) meaning in the semiosphere of ritual through his integrity with the Collective Body.

The ritual process with its transformative and integrative functions is the key moment in the chronotope of the Collective Body, signifying its simultaneous presence in various dimensions of time, its multiprospectible perspective, its integral identity. Therefore, the ritual is a moment of connection of the individual time with the Big Time of the Collective Body; his/her ritual "big moments" (in Turner's terms) are the transitional moments of and within the Collective Body, its structural **reconfiguration, regeneration and development.** The function of ritual, among others is to reintroduce and reinforce the chronotope of the Collective Body into the personal time/life. From this viewpoint, a film as ritual also performs this function—a restoration of a dimension of the Collective Body and its chronotope within the personal time of the viewer.

**Rituals of Affliction and Metasemantics of Shadow.** The ritual of affliction is another important type of ritual emphasized by Turner.[60] This ritual is closely connected with the chronotope of the Collective Body and the revelation of crisis within its collective existence. The ritual of affliction is to a great extent a protostructure for drama; it intersects the perspectives from the past and the future and the contradiction between them. It is designed to restore the past/future modes of the Collective Body's presence and their connection with the key moments of the present. Spirits, hosts and shadows play a central role in this type of ritual. They become signifiers of the past which has a "sacred" knowledge—that of the future within the semantic system of the present. The rituals of affliction reveal that dead ancestors, or shadow, know the origins of the forthcoming trouble and ways to repair the well-being of the community. The semantic, ritual and dramatic functions of shadow in the context of the Collective Body, ritual and cinema deserve comparative analysis, and may be explored with the help of Turner's conceptualization of the shade.[61] As has been widely discussed in film studies literature, for example, by Biro, shadows have played a significant role in cinematic imagery since the invention of cinema.[62] The wide use of shadows as a means of signification in film has two explanations. The first resides in the direct influence of modernist and expressionist aesthetics on cinema art and its self-identification at its beginning, deep-rooted in Romanticism which brought concepts and images of folklore back into high culture. Secondly, indirectly—influential semiosphere of ritual consciousness generated and disseminated its symbolic forms through various levels and forms of culture, thus making a connection between cinematic images ("shades" by their physical features) and the system of meanings attributed to the shadows in ancestor belief. The latter, as stressed by Jung and his followers, ascended to the archetypal status in modern culture. Thus, dead ancestors, spirits and shadows, as ritual signifiers, play a meaningful role in modern narrative structures, as will be discussed in detail in the analyses of Soviet filmtexts.

According to Turner, ritual mind often associates misfortune with the actions of the spirits of the dead. It is not just any kind of spirit, nature spirits or demons who afflict the living; as Turner stresses, "they are the spirits of the deceased relatives."[63] The latter, whose connection within the Collective Body is the most immediate and profound, are considered to be "in charge," capable of afflicting or helping the living, and in any case responsible for the community's well-being. This point strikingly evokes the concepts of the Russian philosopher Fedorov, his belief that all the misfortune of the living will be overcome when all the fathers (deceased ancestors) are revived. According to Fedorov, the ritual resurrection/restoration of the fathers is the ultimate way to maintain a well-being for all. Both, ancestor belief and Fedorov's ideas, which emphasize a profound, however positive or negative, link between the living and their dead, influenced, as was mentioned above, Bakhtin's philosophical anthropology. Both Turner and Bakhtin in their approaches toward semiotic anthropology, emphasized the ongoing role of dead relatives in community's struggle for survival. The significant and never ending role of the dead ancestors defines their ongoing participation in the life of the Collective Body and their rightful presence in the Collective Body's representation in culture. The rituals of affliction as well as life-crisis rituals add new dimensions to understanding the internal functions of and relationships between the generations within the Collective Body.

In his investigation of the ritual of affliction, Turner suggested to use a concept "shade" (Willson's term) rather than "spirit' or "ancestor spirit" for this type of ritual symbols.[64] For this study, it is important to stress the representation of the ritual of affliction at the syntagmatic and paradigmatic levels of many Soviet films—for example, the title and content of the most famous ritualistic Soviet movie, *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (*Teni zabytykh predkov,* 1964, by Sergei Paradjanov), which openly referred to the semiosphere of ritual tradition. The focus of the plot is in the romantic and tragic relationships between the living man and the shade of his beloved, his dead fiancee, whose presence has affected his entire life, as well as his ability to live and procreate without her. The similarity of the Ukrainian story with the Jewish legend *The Dibbuk* (Spirit, Shade) is striking, with one difference—in the former the spirit is female, while in the latter it is male. In both cases the connection between the two people in love does not end with the death of one of them. The mysterious communication of the living with the shade goes throughout all his/her life; their connection proves to be stronger than any connection of the living with other living human beings—it is a *sacred connection.* This type of plot represents a ritual paradigm, a marriage between the living and the dead, widespread in the folklore of many national cultures. The ritual of affliction addresses the situation when the sacred connection of souls (the beloved, relatives, ancestors) is broken, which inevitably results in trouble for one person or even for the whole community.

Why do the shades "come out of their graves" to plague their kinfolk? asked Turner. "The various reasons are alleged, the most important being that the latter [kinfolk] have forgotten them or they have acted in a way that the shades have disapproved of. "Forgetting" implies neglect to make an offering of beer or food... or omitting to mention their names while praying... It may simply consist in forgetting the dead "in one's heart."[65] The neglect of the "beloved dead" ultimately destroys the integrity of the Great Time—the violation of the very ritual chronotope—which echoes and returns as a disaster into the life of the living. In other words, alienation from the ancestors leads to dysfunction within or the disintegration of the Collective Body and the misfortune for the whole community in the realm of present.

One of the most typical points of disagreement between the shade and the afflicted, as Turner stressed, is the latter's violation of or deviation from the procreative function, which is the core and the primary goal of the Collective Body. "Hunting and sex for men, sex and motherhood for women seem to be the values underlined most strongly in life-crisis rituals."[66]

> The woman who has miscarriages, abortions... or who is sterile, is thought to have offended a shade who comes out of the grave and "sits" in her body until propitiated by... rituals prescribed by a diviner... I found that a woman's mother's mother was... the most frequently offended shade, afflicting women in twelve out of twenty-five cases where I could trace the relationship. After her came a woman's own mother... and older sister... This seems significant in view of the fact that women, through whom succession and inheritance are reckoned, go to their husbands' villages after marriage, often far away from their own villages, and may in the course of time cease to remember their older kin on the mother's side who have died. [67]

The mother's side of the family emerged as a symbol of the Collective Body in the ages of matriarchy and represents the Collective Body in a condensed way in most of cultures up to today. Alienation from the symbolic female ancestor—the Mother-of-all—forebodes trouble. Turner found that "forgetting" the shade is the primary and most usual cause of affliction.[68] This is significant also because the affliction manifests the gaps within the Collective Body and the dysfunction of its intergenerational relationships. A loss of memory of a part of the Collective Body means the destruction of its chronotope, and therefore, leads to its dysfunction and even destruction as a composite integral whole. Thus, not only rites of passage but the rituals of affliction are designed to restore the chronotope of the Collective Body, its wholeness within its time and space. The ritual of affliction, an essentially chronotopic and integrating ritual procedure, responds to actual or potential dangers for the Collective Body and is intended to anticipate afflictions and repair the damage to the Collective Body. It represents the modality of the Collective Body's damage control—an issue extremely topical for Soviet antitotalitarian film culture.

**Ritual Identification and Matrix Unity.** Ritual structures are considered in this study to be metastructures and protomodels—the protostructures of dramatic and narrative forms, and therefore, those *of/for* cinema.[69] Further discussion of film as ritual, the dialectical and integral relationship between the individual (protagonist of the narrative or drama) and the community (*dramatis personae,* choir and spectators) must be borne in mind. The modelling function of ritual cannot be fully understood without the issue of ritual identification—a form of matrix identification within the Collective Body network.[70] Performing a given ritual at a given time, the initiand is equated by his action within the Collective Body's semantic field with the (first and any) cultural hero—a protagonist of the inner-ritual (embedded) mythological narrative. He is also identified with all the initiands who previously performed the same ritual. In the context of ritual metasemantics, a viewer, who is undergoing within his viewing time in a movie theater his own personal growth, is equated with the film protagonist. He is also equated with all the other viewers of the same film, who have in the past or who will in the future pass through the film as an arranged ritual model. For this purpose, a film-ritual should be structured effectively as a transformative performance capable of delivering a sacred message. No matter how distant the viewers of the same film/media event are in space and time, the film-ritual manages to organize alienated individuals into a new form of unity, a precondition for the Collective Body's self-comprehension and survival in the modern world.

Consequently, the ritual of affliction, emphasized by Turner in his semiotics of ritual (and echoed by Girard's conception), has special significance for the semiotic anthropology of culture, in general, and of cinema, in particular. The ritual of affliction—a protostructure of tragedy and drama—is especially interesting as it represents an important metaritual paradigm. The latter reveals a complex system of identifications—a controversial "identification-interconnection-opposition" (positive-negative identification quest)—of the initiand and the initiating, the man and his shade. The ritual of affliction has been unfolding throughout the history of world culture in a variety of narrative plots; and the archetypal role of the shadow has been explored many scholars (of Jungian tradition particularly). The semantic structure of this distinctive ritual, with its focus on a shade/shadow has a lot in common with the very semantics of film content and film language and with the initial signification of light and darkness in the construction of meaning in cinema (especially, in its early expressionist and black and white period). The ritual of affliction has affected the paradigms of world literature and drama (*Oedipus, Hamlet*) and cinema (Hichcock, thrillers, *X-files*, etc.) as one of the most influential archetypal plots. In Soviet cinema, the paradigm of the dead ancestor spirit and violation of his/her interests determined the story lines of many well-known movies such as *Shadow, Ivan's Childhood, I am Twenty, Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors, Repentance, Scarecrow, Solaris, The Viola Sonata, Scorpion's Gardens, Whiskers.*

In all the plots mentioned above, the semantics of the shade serves more than just the aesthetic purpose of tragedy. It reveals a complex system of identifications, the paradoxical matrix identity of seemingly distant characters. Their identification with the shade, makes clear to themselves and others the connections within the Collective Body, which otherwise would remain invisible. The one "caught by the shade," afflicted by the ancestor spirit (and a dramatic protagonist, or tragic hero/scapegoat in theatre culture), according to Turner's observations, becomes the central figure of a great ritual gathering. The healer or doctor who is entitled to perform this ritual is one who used to be afflicted and has successfully undergone a similar ritual in the past. Thus, the way to the fame and therefore, to social-spiritual status, is through affliction, concluded Turner;[71] or it terms of Russian cultural tradition, the artist himself should have suffered. The ritual helpers of the main doctor are also those who were afflicted and healed. Each of them is gradually progressing toward the status of the main doctor via participation in similar rituals. This clarifies the high spiritual and ritual role of the castigated artists in Soviet culture, including the film-makers whose films were sheltered. Turner emphasized the way in which doctors or diviners explained how they learned their job or progressed to the role of the initiating: "I started by being sick myself," meaning that the angry shade of one of their relatives afflicted them with illness. The structure of identity in the ritual of affliction then marks the gradual transformation of the afflicted into the healer and reveals the *matrix identification* characteristic of the semantics of ritual, as well as the Collective Body.[72] By these sufferings, the new initiating-shaman establishes and maintains his connection with the powerful ancestor who once had suffered himself, and with the community—spectators, who have troubles of their own and can relate to his pain. Thus, making-meaning, and especially "sacred meaning" is generated through the resonance of suffering, which facilitates the individuals' re-connection and re-identification with each other. The matrix identification is the aspect within the ritual signifying process which results in further multiple (re)presentations and the rhetoric of multiple protagonist in narrative/drama structures. The matrix identity represents a diversity of and a dialogue between coordinated individuals, who are oriented toward the common goal of the ritual and the Collective Body, rather than toward the sameness—monolithic unity of single-minded beings.

According to Turner, there is a double meaning in being caught by shade. One is punished for neglect of his/her memory, but at the same time one is chosen or "elected" to be a go-between in future rituals that put the living into communication with the dead."[73] Thus, the very issue of affliction or suffering is a precondition for sacred communication. The "patient, leading "doctor and lesser "doctors," and the shade itself, belong to the single, sacred community consisting of the elect and the candidate for election."[74] Not only do the initiated and the initiating, the afflicted and the doctor/shaman meet at some level as one entity, identify with each other, but the afflicting shade itself also represents another dimension of the same integral composite ritual protagonist, the Collective Body. "The afflicting shade in a given ritual is said to have been itself afflicted in the same way while it was alive."[75] The very ritual of affliction, as a model, represents the complex system of (re)identification and regulation within the parts/units/stages of the Collective Body. The latter manifests itself in the ritual of affliction as an *object* and *process*, a *concept* and *substance*, revealing its multiple faces and passing through individual identities and fates.

In terms of the ritual action, the (Soviet) filmmaker is making a film-ritual in both capacities—the once afflicted victim of the regime and the doctor-shaman (the initiating /healer).[76] Thus, the issue of author's identification with his protagonist acquires a ritual meaning. The filmmaker is the one who once himself needed a cathartic purification, and he is the one who now performs the ritual as the initiating. He is the one who becomes 'in charge'; he heals the afflicted suffering protagonist and the whole community with effective methods of ritual catharsis. Discussing matrix identification as a part of the ritual process, it is helpful to refer to Turner's classification of the participants of the ritual circle, who may be identified with each other within the context of the Collective Body, and also to re-define them in the context of modern performance:[77]

1) initiand (*protagonist/spectator*);

2) men and women who have been once patients /initiands themselves for the particular ritual and hence can act as major or minor doctors (*choir/critics*);

3) matrilineal and patrilineal kin of wife and husband (*dramatis personae /immediate audience: participants of the discussions on film*),

> 4) other members of the community who come to participate in the ritual dancing (spectators)—representation of the Collective Body. For the final phase, festivity, a general tribal gathering is recruited, perhaps from several distinct chiefdoms. The most massive gathering that integrates several neighborhoods symbolizes the big Collective Body, the Collective Body in its distant borders of space (relative tribes living nearby) and time (former, distant relatives) (*remote audiences, the total pool of spectators*).

**Ritual Knowledge.** As Piatigorski stressed, to act and behave as the "other," a hero /initiand has to be unaware of his "otherness" or, if he knew it before, to forget about it. The imitation of myth, and one may add here, of ritual as well, is impossible in principle. In Piatigorski's words, when one thinks that one is imitating myth [or ritual], one simply acts, speaks and thinks mythologically [ritually].[78] The modelling function of ritual helps to understand the matrix system of identification characteristic for ritual structures; this issue will be discussed further in detail using the materials of the films *Commissar, Little Vera, Repentance,* and especially, *The Viola Sonata* and *Scorpion's Gardens*. The ritual system of identifications is vividly shown in various works by Turner, particularly, in the first two chapters of *The Forest of Symbols.* The social scientists Mary and Max Gluckman wrote, "When an ancient myth is reenacted in a drama, there is no idea that the events are in any way occurring then and there, with the actors becoming the heroes and heroines of that distant event, and the audience participating in the event itself."[79] When the multiple ritual protagonist paradoxically identifies various characters as simultaneously one, and at the same time—in terms of embodiment, representation, reflexivity, symbolization, metatextuality, etc.—s/he simultaneously reintegrates and re-distinguishes the elements /units within the Collective Body, thus manifesting its being and presence. However paradoxical and provocative from the contemporary sense viewpoint, the matrix identity can be understood as the essence of the ritual—secret and sacred—knowledge. It is one the coded messages that the Collective Body communicates/transmits through a variety of ritual narratives of culture, establishing the connections where they seem impossible, controversial or lost. The following set of identifications should be stressed in the system of ritual and film:

> the protagonist = the initiand
>
> the initiating = the initiated: shaman/shadow (former initiand himself) = the actual initiand
>
> the cultural hero (the initiand of the initial event) = the initiating (former initiand) = the initiated (actual initiand) = the viewer (potential initiand). The latter accordingly represent various chronotopes: the eternal /ever repeated time, the past, the present and the future. The modes of the future are vacant for every film viewer, who would fit the empty place of the matrix system of identification as soon as he submerges into his movie theatre seat.
>
> the initiand = the whole actual community of his tribe (of which every individual is the initiand-has been or would be)
>
> the initiand = the integral communities of the past and the future = the Collective Body (including ancestors and progeny), which is the true author and performer, the organizer of the ritual process and ritual event, the initiating and the initiated.

It is not surprising that the most world-famous plots attempt to grasp the "elusive mode of community," the integral entity behind the plot, the secret director of the story line.[80] This mysterious integral entity responds with resistance and anger towards the disruptions within the Collective Body, as shown very vividly in the classics *Hamlet, King Lear, Romeo and Juliet,* as well as the movies of Soviet screen under discussion. The understanding of the matrix system of identifications, which represents the rhetoric of the Collective Body within the narrative realm, is one of the focal concepts in the anthropology of cinema, and in understanding film as ritual. The investigation and revelation of the system of identities within the ritual process in respect to the symbolic map of a given culture (for example, the case of *Scorpion's Gardens*) is the primary goal for symbolic anthropology.[81] Further analysis of the Collective Body image as represented in filmtexts will follow the methods of symbolic anthropology. It will investigate the systems of identities and identifying practices within the narrative/dramatic structure, with respect to the matrix unity of the Collective Body. (Or, in other words, how the protagonist in his dialogical interaction with others, relates to and reflects the whole system of characters, and how their integrity represents the Collective Body). As a symbolic "action field" (in terms of Turner), the film/drama facilitates the protagonist's representation of many groups/generations, and communicates as well as reveals his matrix identity—the connection of everyone with each other.

A story, repeated within Great Time of the ritual process, becomes a *metanarrative;* in such a capacity it functions as a cultural text (and a cultural process), reestablishing the matrix identity—interconnection between the characters and between the generations of readers/spectators. The story—metanarrative—reproduces within each single stage of the Collective Body's development the same autocatalytic process, a ritual process, thus functioning as a program, a modeling system with regards to the macrohistorical goals of the Collective Body. Thus, the ritual as a metastructure, constantly being repeated in a spiral cycle, expresses and addresses not only the needs of culture, but primarily the needs of the Collective Body. Culture, from this standpoint, functions as a metacommunication providing each generation with instructions for the preservation and development of their spatial and temporal segment of the Collective Body.

**The Three-Fold Ritual Structure.** Arnold van Gennep has described rites of passage in terms of three consecutive stages, which are concurrent with Hegel's dialectical triad "thesis, antithesis, synthesis": 1) separation, 2) transition/margin (or, *limen*) and 3) incorporation /aggregation. The essential feature of the transitional liminal stage, that of ritual death, as Turner pointed out, is that the initiands are neither living nor dead on the one hand, and both living and dead on the other.[82] The third stage (and meaning), 'discovered' between life and death by mythological consciousness is constantly reproduced by the ritual, paradoxically representing and reinforcing both life and death. Called the "liminal stage" and the "fruitful darkness" by Turner, it can be equated with Bakhtin's concept of fruitful death. This stage of the ritual transformation, by re-creating

Bakhtin's concept of fruitful death. This stage of the ritual transformation, by re-creating the cathartic "nuclear energy" of the symbolic death-rebirth, has an enormous impact on human nature, particularly in terms of personal development. Ritual mythology constantly plays on the interplay between disintegration and regeneration, inspiring human beings with the hope that there is more to the narrow border between life and death and to the hopelessness of their antithesis/opposition. Within the tertiary code of the ritual triad, this border expands, becoming an autonomous space of a transformative power, endowed by the ritual man a quality of magic. The cinematic experience is another modern dimension that incorporates the regenerative powers of the ritual tertiary code and makes a symbolic death in the darkness of a movie theatre, a truly fruitful transformative phenomenon. In their research on medical aspects of ritual, Grof and Halifax, following Van Gennep and Turner, emphasize the three psychological stages of ritual metastructure as: *separation*—the experience of loneliness, isolation and alienation, characteristic for the no-exit matrices (also prenatal level); *transition*—the experience of death-rebirth struggle and subsequent transcendence (overcoming); *incorporation*—the experience of rebirth, reunion.[82] The third stage involves the reintegration of the individual into his or her community, and it is essential that the person who returns is not the same as the one who entered the initiation process. New conceptual frameworks and world view, as well as redefined status and responsibilities, are enjoyed by the individual as he/she moves out of the initiation hut and enters another and higher mode of being, another stage within the Collective Body's mode of Great Time.

**Symbolic (Re)Birth.** The symbolic equation of death with birth still remains paradoxical for the modern mind. "In a strictly scientific sense it is silly to pretend that death and birth are the same thing," writes Leach, "yet without question many religious dogmas purport to maintain precisely that."[83] Following the naive dialectics of metamorphosis in nature, ritual consciousness identifies death with birth, as has been observed by many anthropologists of various cultures.

> The initiation hut is often called *vagina* or *womb*. It is not uncommon that the same place is also called tomb, the place of burial. In some cultures, the term for gestation, burial and initiation is the same. Conversely, tombs are sometimes built in the shape of wombs, and the dead are buries in a fetal position. Pregnant women could be referred to as the dead and be considered reborn at the time they deliver their children.[84]

In the rites of passage, the symbolism of spiritual death and rebirth is intermingled with concrete biological elements, and the metaphors of birth and conception are acted out in ritual scenarios. "Initiates are frequently stripped off all their clothes, their bodies shorn of all hair, and blood of sacrificial animals is poured over their heads; it is not difficult to see these elements as an approximation of the situation of the neonate."[85] Piatigorski stated that in the structures of myth and ritual "orgasm is mythologically symmetrical to death."[86] Eliade also pointed out the "deep association between symbolic death-rebirth and actual biological birth" and the "overlap of birth, death and sex symbolism." For example, he describes a ritual circumcision called "being born anew" of the Bantu peoples of Africa. The father sacrifices a ram and three days later wraps the child in the animal's stomach membrane and skin. Prior to this the boy has to climb in bed beside his mother and cry like a newborn infant. He remains in the ram's skin for three days; on the fourth day his father and mother have ritual intercourse. In this culture the dead are also buried in ram's skin and in the fetal position.[87]

In the cultural philosophy of Fedorov, Bakhtin's antecedent, the issue of rebirth has also a special significance. His theories are impossible to understand without the anthropology of consciousness and the key role of rebirth in the semiotics of ritual. According to Fedorov, "each liturgy [ritual] is the exercise and manifestation of the hope for revival."[88] He saw the goals of religion in the fulfillment of the sacred instruction—commandment for the total rebirth—something that can be interpreted as the immortality of the Collective Body.[89]

**Symbolic Death.** Although birth is emphasized in the scenarios of the rites of passage, from the very beginning of ritual process symbols of birth are accompanied by the symbols of death. In the first stage, *separation,* the individual is removed from his/her social network and can be totally isolated. The period of separation can be associated with grief over the loss of the old way of being. During the time of separation fear also plays an important role. It is fear of the unknown, fear of the unexpected, fear that can be projected onto the strangeness of this undefined world—the ritual element, which would later emerge in cinema as a suspense. The symbolic space of ritual, which is being modeled according to the fear, contains and causes images that are designed to reproduce the stage of fear and escalate it, functioning as a psychological reinforcing device. Fear generates images that reinforce fear—the stage of symbolic death in the ritual process has to have its prolonged and profound effect. This mechanism has affected the imagery and symbolism of cinema a great deal, and it can be considered a protomechanism that generated certain cinematic genres and provided their inexhaustible presence in modern culture. It is essential that fear impels the initiand to move beyond the ego, which holds onto what is predictable in life. The disintegration of individualism is being inscribed as the effect of the ritual zone of fears. It is during this time of separation, as Grof and Halifax have pointed out, that a deep sense of community often develops as both conscious and unconscious need in a new harmony. The system of common sufferings and identifying practices, including the model-image of cultural hero and acceptance of sacred knowledge together with generations of initiands, constitutes the ritual transformation, which (re)integrates the new member of the Collective Body on the new functional level. The special situation of seclusion, distress and fear (ritual death) combined with expectations (ritual program) that has the effect of binding the initiates together in this common experience through which they all must pass.

**Shock and Disintegration.** The elements of torture and physical suffering, painful separation and struggle for survival are essential for modelling the symbolic death in the rites of passage. In various cultures, the descriptions of this stage share the "general atmosphere of horror and human suffering. The tortures involve dismemberment, disposal of all body fluids, scraping a flesh from bones, tearing eyes from sockets, or similar terrifying manipulations."[90] Sometimes the encounter with death can be staged in such a realistic fashion, as Grof and Halifax have pointed out, that the ritual enactment involves the danger of serious physical trauma or the risk of actual biological destruction. Suffering, the initiands pass the sacred threshold of mortal danger and fear of dying. The symbolic death appears to be the necessary precondition for spiritual transformation. It is within the ritual the bonding and identification with the dead ancestors takes place in a form of symbolic death. By succeeding the trial of ritual, initiands consolidate with the ancestral mode of the Collective Body, constituting its collective integral identity. The essential introduction of pain into the experience of modern (ritual) performance was at the basis of such theories as Artaud's theatre of cruelty, and Eisenstein's cinema of cruelty.[91] The obsession of the American media and audience with horror movies express the ritual need in the experience of symbolic death. The focal role of suffering in the Russian cultural tradition (and the belief that "suffering" can be transformative not only in a cultural but also in a social/historical sense) has had political connotations within the Soviet antitotalitarian cinema art, manifesting other dimensions of the ritual symbolic death in modern cultures.

**Socio-Psychology of Ritual.** As a highly efficient and profound transformative process, ritual most certainly deserves the attention of the scholars in the fields of psychology, mental health and development. For example, already mentioned researchers—representatives of these fields—psychiatrist Stanislav Grof and medical anthropologist Joan Halifax teamed up to explore psychotherapeutic aspects of ritual death, among other issues of mutual interest between medical science and anthropology, in their 1977 collaborative study.[92] They were followed by a number of researchers, the most distinguished of which was the group of authors who collaborated in the collection *The Spectrum of Ritual: A Biogenetic Structural Analysis* (1979).[93] The problems of mental/emotional health and ritual catharsis are so obviously linked in the history of mankind that they have a long history of interdisciplinary study by the medical anthropology, psychology, mental health and the studies of catharsis in the humanities.

Following Van Gennep and Turner, Grof and Halifax in their study on death-rebirth in ritual transformation, as well as in later books by each of the authors, emphasized that powerful rituals existed in most preindustrial societies and ancient civilizations and have been designed to transform and consecrate individuals, groups and even entire cultures. They insisted that these transformative events and, particularly, the experience of ritual death-rebirth are of fundamental importance to the discussions of the most important processes of culture: "Rites of passage are those ritual events whose purpose it is to provide a context for the total redefinition of the individual. This process involves not only psychological and social variables but also basic philosophical and spiritual dimensions of human existence."[94] Exploring the psychological efficiency of the ritual process, Grof and Halifax stressed an integral, profound and effectual transformation versus the partial, superficial and ineffective mechanisms for moral/spiritual change that are used in modern societies. Ehrezweig and Schechner associated human creativity with the state of ritual death: images "of suffering, destruction, and death... in their enormous variety, reflect the various phases and aspects of creativity in a very direct manner, though the central theme of death and rebirth, of trapping and liberation, seems to overshadow the others. Death and rebirth mirror the ego's de-differentiation and re-differentiation."[95] The latter represent the two phases of one highly essential processes, emphasized by Lévi-Bruhl (first) and Levi-Strauss (second) in their studies on the mythological mind. This submerging into the undifferentiating state of mind, which allows the resignification of an individual semiosphere on the deepest levels of the unconscious, was defined by Eisenstein and Ivanov as the primary subject for the semiotic anthropology of cinema.

It is extremely important to emphasize that the process of dedifferentiation should be followed by the alternative phase of redifferentiation. It signifies what

Eisenstein called a cathartic (dually directed) process: regress in form, progress in content. The segments of reality and of the ego ruthlessly destroyed and devoured by the dissociative agents of symbolic death—monsters and beasts—should be reintegrated and resignified. The lack of the powerful and fruitful transformative turn brings what Girard called the "sacrificial crisis," or what can be termed, following Turner, as the "fruitless darkness." The lack of the transformative alteration of the dedifferentiating stage into the redifferentiating marks the boundary between a performance inducing violence in the spectators and one which discharges and (re)directs it into the creative impulse (a controversial issue topical especially for North American mass culture).

**Fruitful Darkness.** The wide historical and geographical distribution of transformative rituals focusing on death and rebirth and their psychological relevance for individuals, groups and entire cultures suggest, as Grof and Halifax pointed out, that they must reflect important basic needs inherent in human nature.[96] Many ancient and contemporary cultures have dramatic stories about heroes who descended to the realm of the dead and, overcoming undreamed-of obstacles, returned to earth endowed with supernatural powers. Equally frequent are references to gods, demigods or heroes who died or were killed and subsequently brought back to life in a new role, rejuvenated or immortalized through the experience of annihilation. In a more obscure symbolic form, the same theme is sometimes represented by the hero being devoured and incorporated by a hideous monster and then either being regurgitated by the beast or making a miraculous escape.[97] In many places around the world, these mythological themes became a conceptual basis for sacred mysteries in which a neophyte experiences ritual death and rebirth. As an archetypal theme of the world culture, death-rebirth has been acknowledged by Frazer, Jung, Turner, Campbell, Eliade, Frye, as well as by various scholars in literary studies on mythopoetics.

Using materials of totalitarian culture, Clark observed that "The majority of initiating ordeals more or less clearly imply a ritual death... followed by a resurrection or new birth. In the Stalinist novel, death and token mutilation have a predominantly mythic function."[98] In Soviet cinema, we can clearly find the same pattern. However, the ideological vector in the later antitotalitarian films is opposite to that of Stalinist culture, but the ritual paradigm of death-rebirth remains the determining factor of narrativity and the formation of meanings. The theoretical basis for understanding the issue of ritual death was provided by Turner. He endowed ritual death with the archetypal and paradigmatic meaning, crucial for all cultures and defined it as a "fruitful darkness," "liminality," a "betwixt and between" ritual stage.

***Prima materia.*** Before the ascent, the transformative impulse may start generating within the ritual process, it is crucial that the low point of symbolic death, the descent, is reached. Ritual "annihilation"—dismembering of the body—is a typical action within the liminal stage of ritual: "After the novice... has been reduced to a skeleton... the bones are then covered with new flesh and the shaman aspirant might even be given new blood."[99] Various deconstructive devices, including the class of monsters, are designed to lower the initiand to the status of "human plasm" (in Turner's terms)—a condition for the re-creative beginning. The person is supposed to be born again spiritually and re-modeled according to the ideal of the community. It is the understanding of the ritual mind that an adult cannot be changed unless and until he is disintegrated back, in this symbolic moment, into the initial pre-existent form. For the ritual death-rebirth, the chronotope of one's personal time has to be reversed in the direction of his birth. The *human plasm* and the *prima materia*—the states achieved in the symbolic ritual death—may be referred to as the protoconditions for one's incorporation into the Collective Body. The individual should be placed back in the womb of the Collective Body, as a "yet-never-born," initiating the state of cell, of pre-conception. This symbolizes the initial moment of creation and the inseparability of death from birth, the end from a (new) beginning. While in the state of human plasm, the initiand is separated from reality, structure, everyday life and common sense and another channel of communication is opened to him—the reality of vision. In most instances the fantastic land that the initiand vividly sees and the personages that he meets are described in minute detail by him during and after trance or liminal states, which is a modality where the vision takes place.

***Vision Quest:* Dream State of Ritual.** The primary structure that determines the origin of both ritual and cinema may be defined as the *vision quest.* The concept is borrowed from anthropology to explain a macrocultural connection between ritual and cinema.[100] Both ritual and cinema may be defined as a response to the vision quest—the search of an alternative state of mind (dream/trance) in order to obtain (via visual/sound images) a sacred message, revelation—information of a superior order, inaccessible through regular mental operations. It is difficult not to see a close connection between the vision in the structure of ritual and the dream in the structure of cinema—theorized in film theory as one of the key-stones of cinematic experience. The dream state of ritual has its own specific semiosphere and its organizational structure.[101] As Bakhtin, Turner, Grof and Halifax pointed out, the symbolism of dreams as well as the system of symbols in the phenomenology of the rite of passage revolve around the issues of birth, sex and death. The *dream state* has become a central issue in psychoanalytic film theory and in film theory in general.[102] However, the very issue of dreams may be discussed within a larger context—that of the ritual and mythological vision. The ritual visions may be referred to as a protocinematic experience of dreaming, similar to experienced by a modern viewer in the course of film-ritual.

One may also hypothesize that the very development of cinema in the twentieth century was determined not so much by technical inventions, but by the profound call of the vision quest based on human nature. (The same refers to the recent explosion of virtual reality in the new media, video and computer imagery). Cinema has given a perfect form (as well as the technical tools) to achieve the profound human need for the vision. The concept of dreams introduced by psychoanalysis narrows the problem to the relationship of the individual with himself, within his psyche—the levels of the conscious, subconscious and unconscious. The anthropological concept of vision embraces the relationship between the individual and the supernatural, which manifests the semantics of the outside—transgression of the individual borders. The concept of vision leads to the modelling function of the Collective Body, represented by and expressed through the ancestors, spirits, shadows and other "sacred instructors" with the superior "know how," essential for one's success and the survival of the Collective Body.

The vision, the imaginary encounter with the supernatural that donates a sacred message to the individual, proposed here as an essential protostructure for both ritual and cinema, has been proved one of the most important moments of ritual and magic. Vision quest may be defined as the individual's need in a personal dream that also has a social meaning and contains a sacred message (a supersignificant revelation previously unavailable to the individual within his/her established system of meanings). A vision quest is probably the most archaic form of spiritual quest—an attempt to rise above oneself. Vision quest manifests something larger—a spiritual need—a modelling system of spiritual elevation, which is a precondition for both ritual and cinematic transformative experience.

Dreams and visions are considered not only a necessary stage within the middle of the ritual process, but also one of the sources of the very ritual form—its beginning. Thus, a cyclic structure of a dream state represents a pivotal point of the ritual process, connecting its beginning with its core. Khuckhohn pointed out that dreams or visions are a typical ritual-originating sources; he described how a shaman-practitioner instituted a new ritual "which he had learned in a dream while sleeping in a cave."[103] Various informant claimed that the legends of their cultures originated in the "visions" of individuals. Navaho data points at the origin of both legends and rituals in dreams or visions.[104] Visions are considered the issue of a great importance by many anthropologists (Ruth Benedict, Hutton Webster, John J. Neihardt), as well as by ritual practitioners; "most North American Indians attach great importance to visions."[105] The vision was associated with the life-generating force. As Lowie pointed out, the ritual men were "convinced that all success in life was derived from visions... The ultimate goal of the vision is to obtain the blessing of a spirit."[106] In the state of vision "the god seeker was usually under a strong emotional impulse... By seclusion in a lonely spot, by his fast, by self-mutilation, he naturally intensified his emotional state." However, as Lowie pointed out, the vision is a part of a larger program (that of the Collective Body, we might add): "What is more, the myths told by his people and the accounts of the supernatural experiences of contemporary tribesman [something that is manifest our days as metatextuality] had left an imprint on his mind and helped to shape the sense impression that came to him."[107] The ritual *protocinema,* in a form of dreams and visions, was indeed highly effective, achieving its goals without actors, camera or projector. "His longings," writes Lowie further, "at the time blended with the visionary pattern of his tribe and with sounds or sights actually experienced under highly abnormal conditions so as to inspire an interpretation of things seen and heard."[108] The function of sound and auditory experience in the vision/dream, studied by Tuzin, is also important in ritual as it is often associated with the dimension of the invisible, hence, supernatural, which related to revelation—the receiving of the sacred knowledge.[109] This dimension of dream is important for understanding the dramatic interaction of sound-visual effects and counterpoint of music and image in cinema—an issue to be further discussed in regard to *The Viola Sonata.*

One of the focal aspects of the dream-within-ritual is that of fear and experience of death: "Among many Plains Indians," pointed out Turner, "boys on their lonely Vision Quest inflicted ordeals and tests on themselves that amounted to tortures."[110] In many cultures, initiatory dreams and visions include "descent to the nether regions, suffering and death, and ascent to heaven with resurrection... At this time demons and ancestral spirits take them [initiands] to the underworld and expose them to a variety of tortures" and ordeals.[111] From this perspective, the narrative/dramatic function of monsters and dragons (further discussed using the materials of the films *Scorpion's Gardens, Scarecrow*, etc.), becomes clear as the "monster- or fantasy-making" practice. The monstrousness functions as a radical primitive deconstruction, a device providing "semantic eruptions"—nuclear-like powerful explosions—with regards to the established system of meanings. Examples of monster-making can be found in Bunuel's surrealistic films, or in Spielberg's recent dinosaur-factory. This monster-making practice—for the initiand and also by him—in his mind—inherited by modern culture is particularly evident in North American cinema. It is constituent element of ritual death, which Turner explained as the following: "Elements are withdrawn from their usual setting and combined with one another in a totally unique configuration, the monster or dragon. Monsters startle neophytes into thinking about objects, persons, relationships, and features of their environment they have hitherto taken for granted."[112]

The more structured, rigid and strong the society's established system of meanings is, the more powerful and horrifying monsters are required for the ultimate catharsis—ritual death in cinema. In North America it takes megaproduction of dinosaurs—ritual reproduction of the monsters—*The Lost World, Jurassic Park;* in post-totalitarian Russia, the threatening metaphoric imagery of scorpions and giant pangolins. The anthropology of cinema has an opportunity to incorporate a concept of vision in order to better understand the place of cinema in culture.[113] Filmtext analysis can also benefit from reinterpretation of a particular "vision" embedded into the narrative structure of many films, by placing it in the context of ritual theory. Various moments/elements of the vision quest, as will be shown below, are emphasized within the narrative structure in such films as *The Viola Sonata, Scorpion's Gardens, Freeze-Die-Revive! Scarecrow, Solaris, Andrei Roublev, Ivan's Childhood, Repentance, It, Prison Romance.*

**Sacred Journey for the Sacred Knowledge.** For Durkheim and his followers, ritual is a set of practices through which the participants relate to the sacred.[114] Lessa stressed that religious rites derive from the suppression of egoistic, antisocial impulses;

thus, *sacred license* is the "culminating moment in a rite of passage."[115] The sacred license, or sacred instruction can be interpreted as the communication with the Collective Body, for which the transmission of the sacred knowledge is the matter of primary importance. According to Grof and Halifax, "the important stage of the ritual journey is the ascent to the heavenly regions by means of a pole, birch tree or magical flight for the purpose of sacred consecration.[116] Thus, the whole ritual order is designed for and oriented towards the donation/reception of the sacred message. According to Huxley, the one on the sacred journey, is called "the man who goes beyond appearances is a searcher after truth."[117] Many researchers of ritual emphasize that the ritual death—a fruitful darkness, is a primary source of sacred knowledge—the wisdom or the mind of the Collective Body of Genus. Through the magical journeys of the initiating or shaman "the unknown and terrifying world of death assumes form and structure, and gradually becomes more familiar and acceptable. Little by little, the region of death becomes knowable and death itself is seen primarily as a rite of passage to a spiritual mode of being... In this transformed condition the resurrected person receives supernatural knowledge and the power of healing from various semidivine beings in human or animal form."[118]

As Turner stressed, it is the ancestors who are believed to be the messengers of the sacred knowledge and the regulators of the necessary developmental changes: "A young man receives a "call" to be a great hunter, much as a person has a call to become a missionary in our society, that is, he receives a message from a supernatural source telling him that he has a vocation."[119] The message comes in a form of a dream, and often it is a dream about the shade of a famous hunter relative.[120] Coming from the shade—a modality of the Collective Body's past, symbolizing tradition, wisdom, knowledge—a sacred message anticipates a change or a need for change within the Collective Body—redistribution of it's intrinsic roles/functions/energies, etc. In Turner's example, the boy is summoned to become a hunter, a provider for the Collective Body; thus, he is called to assist the Collective Body's future. In his study of ritual, Turner stressed that the sacred message constitutes "the crux of liminality"—the core of the transitional/transformative stage of the ritual process.[121]

Turner emphasized the three characteristic features in the ritual communication of the *sacra:* (1) disproportion/exaggeration, (2) monstrousness, and (3) mystery. Characteristically, they all have been highlighted in Bakhtin's theory of grotesque, which, in Turner's terms, may be considered a communication of the *sacra.* The disproportion /exaggeration Turner illustrated with a ritual clay "figurine, nine inches high, of an exaggeratedly pregnant mother shown carrying four babies at the same time, one at her breast and three at her back."[122] This images are strikingly similar to the descriptions of the grotesque body in Bakhtin's book on carnival, and it is obviously symbolically oriented towards the semiosphere of the Collective Body. Monsters, as was mentioned above, are the integral part of the ritual process and the communication of sacred wisdom. In his argument on the monstrous aspect of liminality, Turner developed William James' semiotic concept of the "law of dissociation: "From this standpoint, much of the grotesqueness and monstrosity of liminal *sacra* may be seen to be aimed not so much at terrorizing or bemusing neophytes into submission or out of their wits as at making them vividly and rapidly aware of what may be called the "factors" of their culture.[123]

One should note, in this respect, the significance of monsters as the "dissociative agents" of the Collective Body, as symbolic and ritual instruments of its intrinsic behavioral and semantic reconfiguration. The masks of monsters and dragons represent the Collective Body (and a cultural perspective) delineated in deconstructed and grotesque ways. The symbolic monster theme can be found in modern cinema in almost every movie (with the specific tragic revelation that "monsters are us" in post-Soviet film culture). The ritual function of monstrousness is associated with deconstructive narrative functions and semantic counter-strategies. It will be further discussed using the materials of *The Viola Sonata, Scorpion's Gardens, Freeze-Die-Revive, Scarecrow* and *Prison Romance.*

The secretive, mysterious ways of sacred communication, emphasized by Turner, elucidate the connection between ritual forms and symbolic forms (aesthetics of symbolism) in Soviet cinema—to be discussed in the context of Soviet film culture and its system of meanings and values. "The central cluster of non-logical *sacra* is then the symbolic template of the whole system of beliefs and values in a given culture, its archetypal paradigm and ultimate measure."[124]

**Ritual Quest and Ritual Need.** An essential notion of the *ritual need*—that of the individual and of society should be introduced for clarification of further discussion. The ritual need is experienced by both individual and society; it becomes more urgent if unsatisfied at times of individual and social crisis, at particular times of personal and historical *passages.*[125] The ritual need may be defined as a socio-cultural condition, demanding ritual to collect and re-channel the uncontrollable energies of the individuals and groups, as well as to discharge a social-psychological tension. An unresolved social drama, in Turner's terms, deepens the ritual need of the individuals and community and requires more drastic and effective redressive actions. Film in modern society comes forward as one of the most effectual ritual mechanisms, one of the redressive actions with respect to ongoing social dramas.

An individual may experience a ritual need in the critical moments of life when he cannot function any longer in the way he used to before. A ritual experience, however subconsciously, would anticipate and prepare a person for necessary changes. Society experiences a deeper ritual need when established social mechanisms and official culture prove unable to bring to light a necessity of transformation (the case of Soviet Stagnation during the 1970s-80s). The most powerful situation of a ritual need happens, when both the society, and each individual come to realization, often on the unconscious level, that changes are inevitable, however still cannot rationalize the ongoing process, and consciously prepare to the transformation and adjustment to the drastic change.

The most effective cinematic rituals appear as response to the ritual need of the society, reflecting at the same time the modes of necessary personal growth for the individual. Ritual need may be defined as an openness of the respondent (individual /group) to a) performing the ritual, b) undergoing drastic transformation in status i.e. re-identifying oneself, and c) accepting new 'sacral' cultural values, those which had seemed previously unacceptable. Ritual need is associated with and determined by the need for catharsis (a form of symbolic death-rebirth), and revelation—obtaining an entirely new perspective and system of meanings via a "superior" *sacred message* and the transformative experience.

In modern societies, mass communication via cinema and media attempts to fill the need for ritual structures, taking on itself to a great extent the cultural functions of ritual. The enormous popularity of mysteries and thrillers demonstrates that segments and elements of ritual structures are circulating in culture, while ritual as an integral function is lost. In terms of Grimes' ritual criticism, one can say that we often encounter failing ritual practices, while the ritual need is constantly experienced by the community. We repeatedly meet ever returning elements of ritual structures: supernatural beings, dead and dismembered bodies, monsters, tortures, horrors, mysteries, riddles, lost sacred knowledge, fights of the cultural heros, which relate to the ritual structure as asteroids—broken pieces of the exploded dead planet.[126] In light of the above, it is extremely important to understand how ritual systems are supposed to work, to realize their cultural metafunction as transformative, healing procedures, and to discern what is preserved and what is lost in ritual as a whole in the modern cultural condition, particularly, in the case of Soviet society.

In Soviet totalitarian culture, the elements and agents of ritual structure were closely associated with the margins of society and history, with the disruptions of peaceful social harmony. Mysteries were allowed only in forms of investigation and exposure of spies and other social enemies. Physical tortures, always caused by ideological opponents, were an ongoing theme in the numerous war films (about the civil war and the war with fascism). It was always political enemies, both inside and outside the country, who were *the monsters.* A hero's *symbolic death* could have happened only for the right reason—the sake of the Soviet Motherland; and the *vision* as well as *sacred knowledge* that were acquired on the sacred journey, could be nothing other than the communist idea. An individual ritual quest or, so to speak, the freedom of "sacred knowledge" were strictly prohibited, as were representations of ritual elements based on the materials of "our" perfect Soviet life. Ritual death could have taken place only on the boundaries of the empire, both geographical and semantic, where the homogeneous body of the Soviet people could only have encountered dangerous aliens—foreigners and dissident minds. The physicality of death and torture in film art was measured and administered by censorship, as an overdose could have disturbed the perfect tranquillity of the Soviet existence and caused unnecessary unhappy thoughts. The whole sphere of ritual symbolism was highly ideologized and directed toward the never ending political education of the viewers. But even in carefully measured dosages, ritual structures in film art were under constant control for their potential transformative power. The ritual need of the society was addressed by Soviet official culture by means of consistent representation of cultural heroes—always politically correct—via a system of ideological narratives. These heroes on their sacred journeys have given their lives—"but never really die in our hearts" (symbolic death-rebirth)—for the sake of the people's radiant future, but, more exactly, for the political doctrine. It was the function of antitotalitarian film art to resignify the sphere of ritual death and to redirect the ritual process inside the Soviet political body—something to be discussed with the examples of the selected filmtexts.

All above mentioned theoretical works, as well as modern film and media practice, respond to the *ritual need* of society and may be defined within the theory of culture as an integral part of culture's *ritual quest.* Thus, understanding film as a ritual, or "film-ritual"—a structure that successfully performs a ritual function in culture with respect to hidden social dramas—may contribute not only to ritual and film studies, but also to our understanding of the basic mechanisms of culture.

When one refers to the film as a ritual, it is important to stress that not every film "is a ritual"; some, on the contrary, are not. The 'film-ritual' is a theoretical concept referring to an essential cinematic mode, rather than the actual state of most mainstream movies. To be able to clarify a ritual mode of cinema as a designated condition, it is important to understand why certain movies are designed as rituals and achieve the ritual quality, while other do not. Grimes' innovative concept of ritual criticism allows us to critique and analyze drama, film and media events with respect to their effectiveness in resolving ultimate ritual goals.[127] In order to analyze and classify various films in ritual terms on the scale "ritual—not ritual," (or "effective—ineffective ritual"), it is necessary to distinguish the following categories: *ritual need, ritual structure, ritual mode and ritual theme.*

The ritual structure, in respect to film, is the one that models in the most effective way, the spiritual transformation of the group/individual, through the cathartic discharge during the representation of a relevant social drama. The ritual structure, which embodies itself in the modern cinematic forms, is a paradigm, as we will see below—powerful, and vitally necessary for the society. The ritual mode is relevant to those situations when a movie does not contain a ritual structure, and does not represent a ritual on the film's deep structure completely, but when it responds to the ritual mode by a number of cinematic elements. It is a situation when a film does not function as a ritual, but so to speak, is turned to this direction, or tuned to ritual motifs, partially reflecting ritual structures, and thus responding to the ritual need. The notion of the ritual mode in cinema allows us to consider more films in terms of ritual, discussing various degrees of ritual involvement. The ritual theme represents a case when ritual exists in the movie on the conscious level; as an event, episode, title (*Die-Freeze-Revive!*, or *Repentance, Sacrifice*), theme. The ritual theme may or may not accompany the ritual structure, but in all cases, the ritual theme is a rational response to the ritual need and a rational attempt to represent a ritual mode (especially where the notion of ritual structure is lacking).

It is important to emphasize that ritual need—that of transformation and social and spiritual development/change—is not the only powerful cultural 'need'. Along with the ritual need of transformation, a need for preservation establishes itself in a no less powerful manner. This need is reflected in ceremonies and myths, whose major cultural function with respect to social dramas is to re-establish the status quo and to reinforce the existing situation, social relationships, system of meanings and cultural values. Thus, in the socio-cultural sphere, there is also a *ceremonial/mythological need,* a *ceremonial /mythological structure,* a *ceremonial/mythological mode* and a *ceremonial/mythological theme,* to which cinema responds to.[128]

**The Efficiency of Ritual and Spiritual Elevation.** Rituals occur at times of need in semantic shift and spiritual regeneration—culture's re-evaluation of its established system of meanings and values.[129] Rituals may be defined as a culturally constructed response to the transitional condition in society and life of an individual (the latter are birth, puberty, first maturity, young adulthood, marriage, childbirth, second maturity, and death). At each of these particular points of life, the body, psyche, social status and sacred role of the individual go through some degrees of change. Through a combination of the symbolic drama unfolding from within and external cultural symbols that frame the event, stress Grof and Halifax, the neophyte experiences and ultimately learns in a deeply ramified way the core notion of all rites of passage—that one can suffer through the chaos of liminality and of dying, undergo an experience of total annihilation and emerge form the process renewed and reborn. The key point of ritual transformation is that learning here is profound; it involves not just the intellect but the entire psycho-biological organism. A dialectical process occurs between external events and elements of the environment on the one hand, and the inner experience of the individual, on the other this meshing of unconscious contents emerging into consciousness with cultural symbols denoting renewal creates a situation of profound congruence within the individual. For these reasons, the significance and effectiveness of rituals for personal and biological history, for major psychological transitions, stress Grof and Halifax, deserve special attention from modern psychotherapy. In these situations the individual or social group leaves behind one mode of being, and after passing through the mode of liminality moves into another and totally new existential condition.[130] This new inner existential condition is a result of a highly effective transformative process that appeared to function much better than any propaganda, ideology, education, or any other typical modern rational influence, designed to ascribe an individual with social and moral regulations. The efficiency of ritual transformation, possibly achievable through a cathartic cinematic experience, deserves attention as a key subject of the anthropology of cinema.

**Ritual as Autocatalysis.** Ritual may also be defined in terms of the redistribution and regeneration of energies within the immortal Collective Body. The generative/creative capacity is the major function of the Collective Body, and ritual is one of the effective ways to raise the capability in this direction. Grof and Halifax define rituals with respect to the energy field as "structured events in which individual can confront, experience, and express powerful energies associated with matrices deep in the unconscious":

> It seems plausible that in view of the nature of the psychological forces involved, elemental and uncontrolled manifestation and acting out of these energies could be destructive for the community. It is interesting to mention in this context the opinion of Arnold van Gennep, Margaret Mead, Mircea Eliade, and other outstanding anthropologists, according to which the absence of rites of transformation might be contributing to the social psychopathology observed in contemporary society. Many impulses of a basically destructive and antisocial nature, instead of being acted out with social sanctions in a safe and structured sacred context, leak insidiously into our everyday lives and manifest themselves in a number of individual and societal problems.[131]

Ritual collects and remodels the uncontrollable energies of individuals and, by means of transformative ritual procedures, re-focuses, regenerates and accelerates them as a collective energy *of/for* the restored Collective Body. Ritual deserves special attention as an autocatalysis—provocation and acceleration of psychological reactions in the organism from within. The dimension of the *accelerated time,* discussed in respect to the ritual chronotope represents the autocatalytic quality of ritual processes.

The efficiency of ritual is determined by its autocatalytic quality deeply-rooted in the modelling structure of symbolic death. The effect of "fruitful darkness"—overcoming of death by birth—produces an intense psychological relief, a catharsis. The whole model of the ritual journey integrates death and birth, the individual and the general, knowledge and experience. The phenomenology of personal symbolism (subject of psychoanalysis) and the external symbolic representation (dominant symbols of a given culture) can be combined in ritual events in such a way, point out Grof and Halifax, that they augment each other and result in a powerful and overwhelming personal as well as collective experience. That is precisely what is essential for the study of cinematic experience and construction of a film-ritual. Combining a modern psychotherapeutic perspective on ritual with that of medical anthropology, Grof and Halifax stress that it is within these rites of transformation that the individual's personal boundaries widen to include not only the social organism—the Collective Body, in Bakhtin's terms, or the community, in Turner's—but also supernatural realms and sacred beings who inhabit the world beyond. In terms of semiotics, ritual effectively incorporates the boundaries and external semantic fields, which are signified by the magic/supernatural beings, into the internal world of meanings. Ritual transforms the unreachable *semantic outside* of the given semiosphere into the personalized and acceptable *semantic inside*—new meanings for all. This is the core of ritual transformative semantics.

Many researchers note the profound integration of various levels of the initiand's psyche in the process of ritual transformation. Piatigorski reflects in philosophical terms on the mysterious and paradoxical (for modern consciousness) duality of "knowledge" and "lack of knowledge" on the part of the initiand—his simultaneous awareness /unawareness in the course of events of which he is a part. As a cultural being, and a performer of a cultural tradition, the initiand is told the development of the plot (or, in the case of cinema, the type of plot, the genre, which indicates what would happen). Therefore, he knows exactly what will happen. In contrast, as the initiand and neophyte, left completely alone in the ritual space, he acts as if he does not know what to expect. Indeed, he does not know within the mythological space inside the ritual structure, the outcome of the ritual plot. Piatigorski introduces and discusses with regards to this paradoxical duality such notions as unconscious, homo and heterogeneous consciousness, structured and unstructured consciousness, the state of consciousness versus the structure of consciousness.[132] All these concepts are necessary for exploring this paradox in ritual "knowledge" from the perspective of modern philosophy.

The effectiveness of the ritual is also in the introduction of the individual to the spiritual history of the culture.[133] A cosmogony—a creation/re-creation of the world—is echoed, reiterated in every initiation. Every rite of passage is connected as an integral whole with the totality of ritual tradition—the coded message from/about the Collective Body. Restating his own initiation/growth, by means of the ritual matrix identification, the initiand becomes the Demiurge and automatically (symbolically) creates an entire world. The myth embedded into the ritual, a story of the cultural hero, brings the neophyte into close relationship with the culture's archaic, sacred tradition and its relevance to his/her own psyche. It is the re-sacralization of the individual and the aspirant's introduction to the essential creative impulse in the cosmos that endows existence with new meaning.

**Semiosis, Energy, Evolution.** By means of ritual, the entire semiosis of the Collective Body is constantly being preserved and simultaneously transformed according to the adjustment and needs of each generation, and its elevation to the next stage within the immortal Collective Body. In this respect, ritual presents an extremely interesting example of the autocatalytic process. It derives energy from within itself and creates the impulse for further evolution, powerful enough to reinforce and transform the individual/generation/the whole Collective Body in the right direction. That is why the energy of transformation and the driving force of spiritual evolution (and of the Collective Body), found within the tradition/practice of the rites of passage—life-crisis rituals—should become a focus of the anthropology of cinema. The autocatalytic process, programmed within the ritual structure, is one thing that cinema can (and often attempts) to reproduce. Ritual is more than just a tradition, it is a metastructure functioning as the energy-producing act/field and modelling /programming system for the evolution. Autocatalysis within the Collective Body, and the reiteration of one within the Many (Collective Body, cosmos), represents a proto-quantum semiotics of ancient time.[134]

The Hegelian triad "thesis—antithesis—synthesis" is manifest in the ritual three-fold structure of the symbolic death-rebirth, a primitive model of/for metamorphosis, as a naive dialectics; it does, however "work." The archetype of the death-rebirth has been extensively studied by Eliade and Frye, and other scholars in anthropology and literary studies, using ethnographic and literary materials of world culture. Its significance for Soviet culture has been emphasized by Clark and Masing-Delic.[135] It is in the juxtaposition, or even proto-semantic collision of life and death, and the creative fruitful darkness of the liminal stage, where autocathalysis occurs and the energy starts to reemerge. The power of death, and the fear of death—of annihilation, is used to facilitate further rebirth: the highly energized descent below the zero level of life results in the catapult-like ascent from darkness back to life by the organism's and psyche's self-generative power. The *human plasm,* Turner's term with respect to the liminal state, implies high temperatures of spiritual burning /psychological stress of incredible intensity. His other term *prima materia* refers in the same context to the primordial, pre-evolutionary stage of symbolic death, the re-enactment of which symbolizes the mythological beginnings, the evolutionary impulse as such. Positive and negative energies within the ritual death-rebirth may be metaphorically compared to those which create tornadoes. These energies generate within the ritual process the autocatalytic reaction.

The latter provides the Collective Body with the impulse of life—creative stimulus and impelling force (a magmatic creative core, in Schechner's terms)—again and again. In the context of the anthropology of cinema, it is important to investigate the phenomenology of ritual energy-generation and processes of ritual mid-transition as "the basic building blocks of culture."[136] For the sake of film art and its potential spiritual impact on society, it is necessary to study the autocatalytic process generated and accumulated within the ritual structures—transformative powers of the ritual circle.

## Notes:

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This study is not intended to outline the entire history of the semiotics of ritual, or its various trends and approaches. It is based predominantly on Turner's ritual semantics as the most applicable theory for developing methodology of the anthropology of cinema. The thesis is intended to summarize only the current state of ritual studies, emphasizing concepts and paradigms especially useful for film studies. As the semiotics of ritual may embrace many different topics, and intersect with related fields—anthropology of religion, semiotics of culture, symbolic anthropology, ritual studies, interpretive anthropology, etc.,—this study will focus on a selected number of theoretical issues—those which are the most important for the application of ritual studies to the sphere of cinema. It is important to emphasize again that ritual is discussed in the dissertation not as a religious system, a belief in the supernatural, but as a metastructure, a semantic system, representing the paradigms of change in the semantic field.

[1] Ritual action is always a manifestation of community. On the discussion of the controversial issue of "personal rituals," see Grimes, *Ritual Criticism,* 109: "Psychologists have treated private ritual as synonymous with neurosis. Theologians have regarded self-generated rites as lacking in moral character because they minimize social responsibility. And anthropologists have thought of ritual as traditional, collective representation, implying that the notion of individual or invented ritual was a contradiction in terms."

[2] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols,* 107. Interestingly, Ivanov touches exactly the same phenomenon—the archaic archetypal notion which explains the macrocosm via microcosm of the human body. He points to Bakhtin's "grotesque body" (the most popular concept of Bakhtin) and refers to the similar image-concept in the mythologies of various cultures, for example, the Ancient Khetts's myth of the queen Kanesha who gave birth to the whole people." Ivanov, *Essays in the History of Semiotics in the USSR,* 50-51.

[3] *Fragments for the History of the Human Body* , ed. Michel Feher (New York, 1989) and *Religious Reflections on the Human Body*, ed. Jane Marie Law (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1995).

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[4] Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (London, 1973), 93.

[5] Ibid., 101.

[6] Ibid., 112.

[7] Bryan R. Wilson, ed. *Patterns of Sectarianism* (London, 1967), 336.

[8] Anthony Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of the Community* (London, 1985).

[9] See review by Malcolm Young, in *Man*, 23 (1988), 570-1.

[10] Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of the Community*, 15.

[11] Ibid., 19.

[12] Ibid., 74.

[13] See, for example, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Method in Social Anthropology* (Chicago, 1958) and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Social Anthropology of A.R. Radcliffe-Brown*, ed. Adam Kuper (London, 1977).

[14] This approach allows us to disregard classifications of rituals—there are indeed different types, divisions and subdivisions of ritual—but to focus instead on ritual as a root paradigm, as emphasized by Turner.

[15] "Root paradigms" are a category—extremely important for this research—which Turner defines as: "the cultural transliterations of genetic codes... they represent the species life raised to the more complex and symbolic organizational level of culture, and are concerned with fundamental assumptions underlying the human societal bond..., they go beyond the cognitive, and even the moral, to the existential domain, and in so doing become clothed with allusiveness, implicitness and metaphor. They reach down to the irreducible life stances of individuals..., matters literally of life and death. Root paradigms emerge at life crisis, whether of groups or individuals... One cannot escape their presence or their consequences." Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, 248-49.

[16] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 19.

[17] As it has been pointed at earlier, Hardin uses terms ritual and ceremony interchangeably, while this thesis is based on Turner's differentiation between the two. See Hardin, "'Ritual' in Recent Criticism," 847.

[18] Grimes made a very important point in respect to the issue of "individual rituals": "Psychologists have treated private rituals as synonymous with neurosis. Theologians have regarded self-generated rites as lacking in moral character because they minimize social responsibility. And anthropologists have thought of ritual as traditional, collective representation, implying that the notion of individual or invented ritual was a contradiction in terms." Grimes, *Ritual Criticism*, 109.

[19] Turner, *Dramas, Field and Metaphors*, 46-47.

[20] Turner, *Process, Performance and Pilgrimage*, 142.

[21] Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *Reader in Comparative Religion*, 81. More on the model *of* and the model *for*, see further in the text.

[22] Turner, *Process, Performance and Pilgrimage*, 130.

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[23] Some ideas in this section, as well as the comparative table were presented in my article on Russian Holy Fooldom "Towards the Anthropology of *Yurodivost*: Sources and Methods in Current Research," *Elementa, Journal of Slavic Studies and Comparative Cultural Semiotics,* forthcoming, 1998.

[24] For more on the influence of Byzantium on the very structure of religion in Russia, see the two alternative conceptions by Russian philosopher V.V. Rosanov, *V temnykh religioznykh luchakh: Russkaia tserkov' i drugie stat'i* (In the Dark Rays of Religion: Russian Church and Other Essays), especially the essay, "Russian Church," (Moscow, 1905/1994), and by contemporary historian, Sergei Ivanov, *Yurodivye v Vizantii* (Byzantine Holy Folly) (Moscow, 1994).

[25] More on priesthood and prophetism of Russian artists, see Katerina Clark, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, 1995) and the discussion of Tarkovsky prophetism (the role taken upon himself by the great filmmaker) in Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie. *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue* (Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1994). I disagree with Johnson and Petrie, who critically regard this 'role-playing,' underestimating the factors of profound ritual need in Russian and Soviet Society. It was these factors which determined "prophetism" of the artists, not the desire for glory of particular individuals; the function of the artists as 'sacred instructors' versus 'profane instructors' associated with the regime should be discussed not as voluntarily acts of the artists-"prophets" (of Tarkovsky, for example), but as a manifestation of the socio-cultural condition..

[26] Leach, "Ritualization in Man, " 231.

[27] Margaret Mead, *Twentieth Century Faith: Hope and Survival* (New York, 1972), 127.

[28] Clifford Geertz, " Religion as a Cultural System," 81.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ortner, "On Key Symbols," 92-93.

[31] "The Great Family," "The Machine," and "The Garden"—new metaphors/key symbols of Soviet culture investigated by Clark using literature—may be interpreted as representations of associated and alternative metaphors designed within Stalinist culture to replace the Collective Body as a cultural root metaphor, and to reinforce ideological functions of the key symbols. See, Clark, *Soviet Novel.*

[32] Ortner, "On Key Symbols," 95-96.

[33] See Robin Horton, "Ritual Man in Africa" in *Reader in Comparative Religion* and Roy A. Rappaport, "Ritual, Sanctity and Cybernetics" in *Reader in Comparative Religion.*

[34] Ivanov, *Essays in the History of Semiotics in the USSR,* 5.

[35] On the connection between ritual and drama, see Jackson Cope, *The Theatre and the Dream: From Metaphor to Form in Renaissance Drama* (Baltimore, 1973). Cope defines ritual as an "order of acts which at first level imitates... re-enacts an established pattern. But at its second level of definition, ritual demands that this conservative re-enactment be really efficacious, effective in its repetition as it was in its origin. Thus ritual is a present act which historically recalls the past for the purpose of reordering—even

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predetermining—the future. But that present moments of re-enactment merges into the future, and so makes the efficacy of predictive action inevitable as its pattern evolves from contingency into control. In short, ritual is a prediction which, completed, fulfills itself," 171.

[36] See, for example, Turner on another possible binary opposition 'ritual — ceremony': "I consider the term 'ritual' to be more fittingly applied to forms of religious behavior associated with social transitions, while the term 'ceremony' has a closer bearing on religious behavior associates with social states, where politico-legal institutions also have greater importance. Ritual is transformative, ceremony confirmatory." Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 95. Therefore, the dichotomy between ritual and religion starts where an official/organized religion loses its ritual transformative mode, while keeping only the ceremonial, confirmatory.

[37] For example, Hardin uses the terms ritual and ceremony "interchangeably, as indeed most scholars do." See Hardin, "Ritual" in Recent Criticism," 847.

[38] For example, Khrushchev's speech, his exposure of Stalin's crimes at the 22nd Communist Party Congress, usually a ceremony, was a moment when a ceremony turned into a ritual transformation. Or another example: Gorbachev's unexpected speech on the 1986 Party Congress. The whole country was listening, not trusting its ears (something that nobody ever did before in the Soviet Union in their right mind, unless they were obliged to or were searching for the material for jokes; the Party Congress was a quintessential symbol of nonsense and Stagnation). It was hard to believe that breaking the ceremonial mode, a code of a Party Congress, with some human words and real meanings, Gorbachev preconditioned a transformation, the beginning of *perestroika.* I recall this intrusion of ritual into the frozen world of Stagnation shocking for the whole country. It was quite a surrealistic picture for the Soviet Union: usually indifferent to political speeches, people everywhere—in the stores, on the buses, at the work places (although nobody knows where thousands of portable radios appeared from) were listening to the Party Congress anticipating a change.

[39] A brilliant example of such transmutation is presented in the article by Maya Turovskaya, "The Strange Case of the Making *Volga, Volga,*" in *Inside Soviet Film Satire.* The critic tells a story of the famous comedy of the Stalin time. First designed as a true film carnival with the elements of satire, *Volga, Volga* ended up as a careless conformist comedy, a festival of happy Soviet citizens, while the film authors and creators gradually—one after another—were disappearing in concentration camps.

[40] Grimes, *Ritual Criticism,* 27.

[41] The practice of ritualization of ideology in totalitarian culture, described, for example, in Clark's study of Soviet narratives, may be defined in Schechner's terms as "parashamanism." The latter "turns orthodox ritual on its head. Ethological procedures are mimicked, neurological responses elicited—but in the service of ideas and visions of society that are anything but conservative." Schechner, *The Future of Ritual,* 258. On "ritual" in the political theatre of contemporary China, particularly, with respect to the diverse cultural

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representation of the Tiananmen Square event, see the same book, 52-54.

[42] On the method of processual symbolic analysis, see more Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture,* 243-55.

[43] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols,* 26.

[44] Ibid., 27.

[45] Ibid.

[46] See Arnold L. Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago, 1909/1960) and Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Antistructure,* as well as other books by Turner.

[47] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols,* 7.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Expressing the idea, similar to later conceptualization of Chronotope by Bakhtin, Propp stressed that "the wonder world is often unexplainable... For example, some motifs are based on alternative conceptions of space, time and multitude than those we are used to. Therefore, the forms of archaic consciousness should be investigated for the explaining of the wondertale's genesis," Vladimir Propp, *Historical Roots of the Wondertale,* 31.

[51] Edmund R. Leach, *Rethinking Anthropology* (London, 1961). See the chapters "Two Essays Concerning the Symbolic Representation of Time."

[52] Hardin, "'Ritual' in Recent Criticism," 851.

[53] More on the conceptualization of time in cinema, and cinema as a conceptualization of time, see in Andrei Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema* (Austin, 1989) and *Time within Time: the Diaries, 1970-1986* (London & New York, 1993).

[54] Edmund R. Leach, *Rethinking Anthropology* (London, 1961).

[55] Prince defines chronotope as the nature of and relationship between represented temporal and spatial categories. The term designated and emphasizes the utter interdependence of space and time in (artistic) representation. Gerald Prince, *Dictionary of Narratology* (Lincoln & London, 1987), 13. Bakhtin's Chronotope may also be defined as a form of semantic/structural organization and conceptualization of time/space within a narrative structure. It is responsible for the clarification of the following issues: (1) where and when does the action take place, (2) how are the conceptions of time and space of a given plot connected with each other, (3) if the time/space is heterogeneous—the action takes place in different time/space segments—then how are the latter are interconnected, (4) what does this type of connection mean for the development of action, (5) what is the special message that the conceptualization of time and space adds to the (meta)meaning of the whole text. This concept was inspired by the Einstein's new philosophy of time and space; the significance of Bakhtin's concept of Chronotope overcomes the boundaries of literary studies.

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[56] On the ritual objects in modern culture, which create a special mythological time/space (Chronotope) around them, see Mikhail Yampolsky, "In the Shadow of Monuments," in *Soviet Hieroglyphics: Visual Culture in Late Twentieth-Century Russia,* ed. Nancy Condee (Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1995). See also on this issue, A.A. Donohue, *Xoana and the Origins of Greek Sculpture.* (Atlanta, 1988); and Alois Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Charter and Origin," *Oppositions* 25 (Fall 1982): 21-51.

[57] "The mutual understanding of centuries and millennia, of peoples, nations, and cultures... provides a complex unity... All this is revealed only on the level of great time... Contexts of understanding. The problem of remote contexts. The eternal renewal of meanings in all new contexts... great time: infinite and unfinalized dialogue in which no meanings die." Bakhtin, "Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences," in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays,* trans. Vern W. McGee, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, 1986), 167, 169. Bakhtin's concept *bol'shoe vremia* can be translated into English as *big* or *great time.* "Great Time" sounds more accurate, according to the original meaning, but "Big Time" correlates with Turner's concept of ritual as the "Big Moments" of time, and therefore contains an additional important connotation. Emerson correctly considers the concept of Great Time a reference to "the mutual understanding of centuries and millennia, of peoples, nations, and cultures, [it] provides a complex unity of all humanity, all human cultures," in M.M. Bakhtin, "Towards a Methodology for the Human Sciences," cited by Emerson, "Introduction," in *Bakhtin in Contexts,* 23. In Emerson's words, Bakhtin's Great Time is "some temporal level where all unexpressed or potential meanings are eventually actualized, where every idea finds a context that can justify and nourish it. Great time is neither abstract, nor ahistorical, nor systematic," it is an "organizing idea for history," Caryl Emerson, Introduction to *Bakhtin in Contexts,* 23. While appreciating Emerson's very insightful definition, I would argue with the word "history" in her interpretation and stress that the Great Time is an organizing idea not for history (as a linear and logical construct of social sciences), but precisely for the "history of the Collective Body," for its processual organization in time, which gives birth to both political history and the history of ideas.

[58] V.P. Goran investigates the symbolism of Fate in Ancient Greece, in its development from archaic rituals to cultural mythology. He pointed to the interconnection between the concept of fate (which can be associated with personal time), and the concept of kinship (associated with the time of the Collective Body). The magic ritual of making clothes for the new-born performed by the old mothers-of-all, matriarchal ancestors, described by Goran, may be interpreted as a symbolic action of transfer the skin/coating of the Collective Body from its past members to the new ones as a symbol of unity. The mythological Spinners, thus have become the goddess of Fate, providing a sacred connection between the individual life and the life of the Collective Body. Goran pointed out at the crucial historical moment when this connection ceases to remain obvious. He shows that in the time of Homer, the family as an integral unit within the kinship system becomes more independent. In new historical conditions—the disintegration of the kinship system—the ritual patronage of the community (Collective Body) over the

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new-born was preserved as a divine function of Great chthonic goddess of Fate, but it was no longer immediately associated with the kinship as a sacred system of meanings. As "kinship becomes more and more abstract category for the individual... and as the birth ceases to remain a collective affair of the kin," the function of the Great Goddesses of fate in the mythology of Ancient Greece loses its immediate connection with the ideology of kinship. See V.P. Goran, *Drevnegrecheskaia mifologema sud'by* (The Mythologeme of Fate in Ancient Greece) (Novosibirsk, 1990), 164-65. Later in modern culture, the connection described by Goran—that of the personal time with Great Time of the Collective Body—becomes almost unrecognizable in the popular image in *Sleeping Beauty*—the new-born princess in a cradle, greeted by the three old fairies.

[59] See, for example, Turner, *The Drums of Affliction.*

[60] Ancestral beliefs and practices concerning ancestors had a lot of cultural variation in diverse ethnographic discourses. However, they all have in common the significance of the ancestors for the living and the open channel for their communication and interaction. Turner's conceptualization of the shade is rooted in his study of a particular cultural/social tradition, in this case Ndembu ancestors, but it achieves a metasemantic meaning within his study of ritual paradigms essential for all human, represented by his semiotic anthropology. Avoiding any discussion of particular cultural/national practices, and with an emphasis on invariants and paradigms rather than variations, the meaning of the shade will be used in this study in the system of meanings of Turner's semiotic-anthropological tradition.

[61] Biro, *Profane Mythology,* 95.

[62] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols,* 9.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols,* 10.

[65] Ibid., 8.

[66] Ibid., 12.

[67] Ibid.

[68] On the critique of Cambridge school in the 1970-80s, see Hardin, "'Ritual' in Recent Criticism." Although I am aware of the modern arguments against the Cambridge school and myth criticism, it is the position of this study that Turner's most recent developments in ritual theory allow a return to this discussion on a new level.

[69] Levi-Strauss pointed at differentiation as one of the key mechanisms of mental operations developing within the mythological mind, see Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago, 1966), 75. However, in the context of Levi-Strauss's studies of differentiation-identification mechanisms, the issue of the Collective Body may bring light to the fact that the controversial and dialogical process of differentiation became more effective within the larger preserving unifying system, as its alternative function and its intrinsic challenge—which maybe a more accurate definition of this mechanism. Culture constantly

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produces categories and distinctions, which are in turn constantly reversed and tested as identifications within a unifying system in terms of the community's vital needs, its semiosphere and its ideology.

[70] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols,* 10.

[71] The aspects of matrix identification may be explained as the following in Turner's words: ritual "transcends distinctions of rank, age, kinship position, and... even of sex. Much of the behavior recorded by ethnographers in seclusion situations falls under the principle: 'Each for all, and all for each.' Turner, *The Forest of Symbols,* 100-01.

[72] Ibid., 10-11.

[73] Ibid., 11.

[74] Ibid.

[75] On the "priesthood of Russian intelligentsia," see Clark, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution.*

[76] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols,* 14.

[77] On the "myth of knowledge," see A.M. Piatigorski, *Mythological Deliberations: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Myth* (London, 1993).

[78] Mary Gluckman and Max Gluckman, "On Drama, and Games and Athletic Contests." In *Secular Ritual,* ed. by Sally Moore and Barbara C. Meyerhoff (Assen, Neth., 1977), 227-43. This paragraph is, however, followed by a mistaken conclusion: the drama is presentation, not a representation as ritual is. Having made an interesting observation, the Gluckmans mistakenly oppose ritual to drama, overlooking the very ritual origin of drama and depriving ritual from its very essence of the creation in time. This mistake is characteristically typical for cultural studies, where drama and narrative is still cut from its ritual roots and the concept of ritual is equated to that of ceremony, as it used to be in the pre-Turner anthropology.

[79] Here I borrow the expression from Hardin in "'Ritual' in Recent Criticism."

[80] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols,* 26.

[81] Ibid., 96-97.

[82] Stanislav Grof and Joan Halifax, *The Human Encounter with Death* (New York, 1977), 195.

[83] Leach, "Ritualization in Man," in *Reader in Comparative Religion,* 227.

[84] Grof and Halifax, *The Human Encounter with Death,* 193. See also on this matter, Gregory Bateson, *Naven.* 2nd Ed. (Stranford, 1958). Among the Iatmul, a New Guinea culture, the entrance to the initiation hut is called *clitoris gate.*

[85] Grof and Halifax, *The Human Encounter with Death,* 193.

[86] Piatigorski, *Mythological Deliberations,* 194.

[87] For more on this, see Mircea Eliade, *Rites and Symbols of Initiation: the Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth* (New York, 1958).

[88] Fedorov, *Sochineniia,* 11. Fedorov stresses the ritual roots of religion. The very meaning of his key concept 'Common Cause' (*Obshchee Delo*) is connected to ritual. Fedorov's Common Cause, as

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Semenova points out in her introduction, should be understood as derived form 'liturgy,' which in Greek means 'the common service,' common cause, and which is also a ritual. Thus, Fedorov's teaching has an immediate connection with the problematic of this thesis, with the issues of the Collective Body and ritual. His deliberations on the liturgy are close to Radcliffe-Brown's interpretation of ritual as a re-creation of the community.

[89] See Fedorov, *Sochineniia,* 28. Fedorov juxtaposes modern philosophy to ritual thinking/acting: "Rebirth (resurrection) is not a philosophical concept; rebirth collects, revives and recreates everything, while philosophy separates, makes abstractions and thus, destroys everything... Only re-creation, the restoration of everything perished and the immortality of everything disappearing should be admitted as the complete proof of true existence." Ibid., 30-31.

[90] Grof and Halifax, *The Human Encounter with Death*, 194.

[91] See more on this aspect of Eisenstein's film theory in Ivanov, *Essays in the History of Semiotics of the USSR,* and Nick Lary, *Dostoevsky and Soviet Film: Essays on Demonic Realism* (Ithaca & London, 1986).

[92] Grof and Halifax, *The Human Encounter with Death.* See also other works by Grof (psychotherapy): *The Adventure of Self-Discovery* (1988), *The Stormy Search for the Self* (1990, with Kristina Grof), *The Cosmic Game* (1996), and other works by Halifax (medical anthropology): *Shamanic Voices* (1979), *Shaman: the Wounded Healer* (1982), *Fruitful Darkness* (1993).

[93] Eugene G. D'Aquili, Charles D. Laughlin, and John McManus, ed., *The Spectrum of Ritual: A Biogenetic Structural Analysis* (New York, 1979). Although the issues of this collection are of importance for the semiotics of ritual, the biogenetic aspects of ritual are omitted in the present thesis, for the sake of emphasis on the film-ritual.

[94] Grof and Halifax, *Human Encounter with Death,* 191.

[95] Anton Ehrezweig, *The Hidden Order of Art* (St.Albans, 1970), 189-90. For more on the connection of creativity and ritual death, see Schechner, *The Future of Ritual,* 261.

[96] Grof and Halifax, *Human Encounter with Death,* 202.

[97] Ibid., 197-98.

[98] Clark, *The Soviet Novel,* 178. On the paradigm of "life after heroic death" (an invariant of ritual symbolic death), and its ideological contexts in Soviet culture, see Irene Masing-Delic, *Abolishing Death: A Salvation Myth in Russian Twentieth-Century Literature* (Stanford, 1992).

[99] For more on this stage of ritual, see Grof and Halifax, *Human Encounter with Death,* 196.

[100] For more on the vision quest, see Robert H. Lowie, "The Vision Quest among the North American Indians" in *Reader in Comparative Religion.* It is necessary to point out the distinction between the meaning of "vision" in anthropology and narratology: the latter considerably narrows the concept to "the point of view in terms of which the narrated situations and events are presented." See also Prince, *Dictionary of Narratology,* 102. Also find there the bibliography on the concept of vision in narratology.

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The task for the anthropology of cinema, as well as for the new ritual criticism is, however, to return the concept of vision (as well as other related notions) its ritual-semiotic meaning and expand its use beyond that of just a technical term in narrative studies.

[101] Schechner defined the dream state of ritual in the following terms: "Dreams are the paradigms of liminality, existing in the world totally "as if." Dreams take place between the clarity of reasoned thought and the confusion of lived and recollected experience... Dreaming can be trained as a technique of the mind partly dissolving boundaries between unconscious and conscious, private fantasy and public representation... Performing the dreams actualizes what can never be shown." *The Future of Ritual,* 261-62.

[102] On the psychoanalytic film theory and the conceptualization of dreams in film studies, see, for example, Robert Stam, et al., eds., *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics: Structuralism, Post-Structuralism and Beyond* (London & New York, 1992), Noël Carroll, *Mystifying Movies: Fads an Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory* (New York, 1988) and David Bordwell and Noël Carroll, *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies* (Madison, 1996).

[103] Clyde Kluckhohn, "Myths and Rituals: A General Theory," 71.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Lowie, "The Vision Quest among the North American Indians," 286.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid., 287.

[108] Ibid.

[109] On the auditory experience in the vision/dream state, see also Donald Tuzin, "Miraculous Voices: the Auditory Experience of Numinous Objects" in *Current Anthropology* 5 (December 1984).

[110] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols,* 100.

[111] Grof and Halifax, *Human Encounter with Death,* 195.

[112] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols,* 105.

[113] Some steps in this direction have been already made. See, for example, Lary, *Dostoevsky and Soviet Film: Visions of Demonic Realism.*

[114] See, Durkheim, "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life."

[115] Lessa, *Reader in Comparative Religion,* 220.

[116] Grof and Halifax, *Human Encounter with Death,* 196.

[117] Francis Haxley, *The Way of the Sacred* (New York, 1974), 6.

[118] Grof and Halifax, *Human Encounter with Death,* 196.

[119] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols,* 11.

[120] Ibid.

[121] The given sacred instruction may also be "in law and in kinship rules, and in technology to fit neophytes for the duties of future office." See more on this, in Turner, *The Forest of Symbols,* 103. Here

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and further in this section, the references are to the chapter, "Betwixt and Between."

[122] Ibid., 103-104.

[123] Ibid., 105.

[124] Ibid., 108.

[125] What is defined here as an unsatisfied ritual need may also be defined as a "ritual disorder," or "ritual deficiency." It is described by Erich Neumann in the following terms: "In modern man [for whom] collective rites no longer exist and the problems relating to these transitions devolve upon the individual, his responsibility and understanding are so overburdened that psychic disorders are frequent. This is the case... in puberty, in marriage and mid-life... and in the hour of death. All these stages in life were formerly numinous points at which the collectivity intervened with its rites; today they are points of psychic illness and anxiety for the individual, whose awareness does not suffice to enable him to live his life," quoted by Grimes in *Ritual Criticism,* 108.

[126] For example, enormously popular recent film/media events, such as *X-Files, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Independence Day, Men in Black,* and the whole genres of mysteries and thrillers.

[127] See more on this matter, for example, on watching TV as a ritual action, in Grimes, *Ritual Criticism.*

[128] In this study, these modes will not be the focus of the analysis. They will be used in order to clarify specific features of ritual, its limits (in socio-semantic sense) and to define the modes of film as a ritual in comparative analysis with that of myth and ceremony.

[129] For the sake of coherent argument and conciseness, the whole important sphere of neurobiological study on ritual, which proves both the genetic and cultural origin of the ritual action and its determination on the neurobiological level, is omitted in the dissertation. On these matters, see Turner, "Body, Brain and Culture," and the collection *The Spectrum of Ritual,* eds., d'Anquili et al. Although I do not see a contradiction between the cultural and genetic aspects of ritual, and disagree with Schechner's critique, I would like to readdress the readers to this controversy, see Schechner, *The Future of Ritual,* 256-57.

[130] Grof and Halifax, *Human Encounter with Death,* 191.

[131] Ibid., 195.

[132] See, Piatigorski, "The Myth of Knowledge" in his *Mythological Deliberations,* 152-199.

[133] For more on this matter, see Grof and Halifax, *Human Encounter with Death,* 194-195.

[134] I define "quantum semiotics" as a representation/study of complex semantic systems—the multidimensional, heterogeneous and diachronic structures/processes in the semantic field. The term was introduced in the program of the Annual Semiotic conference at the University of Toronto, fall 1997. Although there is a controversy in the usage of physic terms in semiotics, I think that a metaphor may be useful at the preliminary stage in the development of theory.

[135] See, Clark, *The Soviet Novel* and Masing-Delic, *Abolishing Death.*

[136] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols,* 110.

# Chapter 3. From Ritual to Film: Towards the Semiotic Anthropology of Cinema

Outlining paradigms of the semiotics of ritual, which are associated with generating models (or constituents of a modeling system), a researcher in the semiotic anthropology of cinema can choose several directions for theoretical deliberations. Among the topical theoretical issues of film studies that will inevitably benefit from collaboration with anthropology are the following: the Collective Body/multiple protagonist, suspense, montage, catharsis, dramatism, ritual chronotope, identification processes, apparatus, metaphoric cinema, symbolism, narrative paradigms.

**The Condition of Film-Ritual Studies.** In reconstructing the prehistory of cinematic experience in the modality of ritual, this study follows the tradition of mythocritique and mythopoetics in literary ritual criticism. The object of this research may also be called the genesis of film—"paleontology" or "archeology" of film culture, or investigation of "cinema before cinema." Analysis of ritual in this context as a "protocinema" and analysis of cinema in the context of ritual as a "film-ritual" require the integration of the most recent and advanced trends in film and ritual theory. However, the prospective outcome of this approach is based on the following new conditions in scholarship:

> —new crucial developments in anthropological theory, unavailable to previous theorizations of narrative/film and ritual;
>
> —investigation in the context of new theories (anthropology of performance and anthropology of experience) the ritual roots of drama and performance;
>
> —the ongoing discussions on the most essential paradigms of the philosophy of culture.

The three above mentioned factors determine the urgency of the proposed approach; combining methods of the semiotic/symbolic/interpretive anthropology of cinema is potentially beneficial for both film and ritual theory. Rituals are referred to here as "self-reflective systems" (Kluckhohn): "The structure of new cultural forms (whether myths or rituals) will undoubtedly be conditioned by the pre-existent cultural matrix."

From this standpoint, rituals-within-cinema are a logical part of cultural evolution. According to the anthropology of experience, modern societies cannot function without reproducing rituals within the most popular forms of mass media and performance in our time. The semiosphere of twentieth-century film culture has been subliminally affected and stimulated by the powerful semiosphere of ritual, which has existed for millenniums. To encode the subconscious ritual symbolism in well-known movies means bringing a new understanding to the statement of modern culture and behavior of modern audiences. The first part of the dissertation focuses on ritual as a secret/sacred cultural code; the second is devoted to de-coding the Soviet filmtexts in the context of ritual symbolism.

**Semiotics of Ritual and Film Theory.** Film theory has had for a long time the status of phenomenology. From the very beginning, the main impulse of cinema was to emancipate itself from the bosom of theatre and to establish itself as a new independent art form. Thus, the obvious roots of cinema in drama were artificially cut off, suppressed in the emerging film theory. Its early theorists choose to stress the affiliation of cinema with visual arts rather than with drama and performance.[1] As a peculiar cultural experience of a new type, cinema was thought to require an entirely new theoretical apparatus to explain its uniqueness. Gradually, the approaches that were established as legitimate parts of film theory were derived from other disciplines: language, semiotics, psychoanalysis, narratology. The mainstream of film theory, especially in North America, has never explored the possibility of an anthropological perspective on cinema. Undoubtedly, we cannot fault film scholars for not looking at ritual: every area of studies has its specific focus. But developments in twentieth-century anthropology have had obvious parallels with twentieth-century film theory: linguistics, study of meanings and symbols, studies of cultural identity, the unconscious and sexuality, studies of myths and ritual story-telling. All these areas are close to the interests of film theorists. The latter ought to "compare notes" with representatives of anthropological theory. Theoretical concepts of anthropology and film studies undoubtedly represent a fruitful area for comparative study, beneficial for both disciplines. The anthropology of cinema, as a new interdisciplinary approach, is capable of placing cinema in the context of human experience, which has determined cultural life throughout the millennia, and to show what place has cinema taken in modern era, according to the deep-rooted ritual needs of society.

**Visualization of the Collective Body.** Attempts to represent the root metaphor which Bakhtin's named *rodovoe telo* in the visual or narrative forms have determined a great variety of plots and techniques in the history of art and culture. And indeed, how can the Collective Body be reflected in cinema? In Soviet film culture, and in the works of Eisenstein in particular, the (proletarian) masses symbolized the politicized Collective Body. Representation of the masses was considered by official culture an important ideological goal of Soviet cinema. Mass scenes were prescribed (if not "ordered") by the regime to every filmmaker, reflecting one of the Soviet "theatre state's" ceremonial modes. The images created by Eisenstein are especially important in this respect, as he is not only a founding father of Soviet cinema, but also the first theorist of the anthropology of cinema. His experimentations with and theorizations of the representation of human masses in cinema are important for understanding the connections between twentieth-century film culture, ideology and the concept of the Collective Body. Although Eisenstein's cinematic images of masses seem to have perfectly fit Soviet culture's ideological agenda—and he was repeatedly praised for this—Eisenstein's "mass scenes" always contained something very different on the level of deep structure.[2] There were more than a justification of the October revolution in metaphorical imagery of the famous representations of masses in *The Battleship Potemkin* (especially the stairs episode) *Strike, October,* as well as in the prohibited *Bezhin Meadow* and *Ivan the Terrible,* part II. On Eisenstein's part it was an attempt to comprehend ritual consciousness beyond the collective actions and the very mechanisms of mythologizing. For theorizing Soviet culture, its apologists adopted a special concept, the "hero-mass," which was the subject of Soviet culture's special pride. This concept can be linked to a unified "man-mass," according to Ortega y Gasset. The masses as a collective protagonist had been a sacred cow of Soviet cinematography, however, it was an undifferentiated mass (or mechanical unity in terms of Durkheim) versus a differentiated mass, an "organic unity" of the Collective Body.

One of the key functions of Soviet totalitarian cinema, as demanded by ideology, was the visualization and dramatization of the masses' ultimate heroic actions—to be perceived by the people as the *model for* a prescribed "free-will" collective sacrifice. Visualization of *the People's* sacred image on screen had a meaning of ritual initiation/incorporation of every society's member/film-goer into the wholeness and sacredness of the Mass. It was the ultimate function of Stalinist cinema as an ideologized ritual performance (compare with Greetz's' concept of the state theatre—ritualization and theatricalization of every aspect of official life). Enormous—unimaginable even in the Hollywood—amounts of money have been often spent by the Soviet government for gigantic mass episodes in Soviet movies, something that has become a subject of Western filmmakers' envy after the Soviet four-part *War and Piece* epic was released in the West. The gigantism of Soviet totalitarian cinema had a ritual meaning of "cosmology-making," typical for quasi-religions. Mass episodes in Soviet movies were the "cinematic versions" of Egyptian pyramids—sacred constructions, designed for creating of order from chaos. The expenditures were always covered and justified by the government as they were ideologically associated with the vital ritual function of Soviet cinema: integration—incorporation of Everyman into the Giant *political* collective body. The following principles of visualization of the human masses on the Soviet screen were applied: *narodnost'* (the masses should consist of identifiable 'men of the people,' preferably blue collar), *politizirovannost'* (the masses should demonstrate its political orientation/ strong sense of political purpose) *soznatel'nost'* (awareness and understanding of political tactics and strategies were required, with the characters' ability to rationalize and articulate political agenda as an asset) and *organizovannost'* (the masses should be structured and organized for the purpose of political struggle). It is easy to see how these principles depart from the ideology of the Collective Body in Bakhtin's interpretation and from the ideology of community in Turner's ritual theory.

Although Eisenstein displayed these qualities on the screen surface, he was in fact interested in something quite different. In the context of the anthropology of cinema, it is interesting to compare Eisenstein's deliberations on the issue close to the Collective Body in the 1930-40s, and Ivanov's theorization of the subject in the context of semiotic anthropology. Ivanov points out the atmosphere of *pervobyt* (primary/tribal relationships and customs), which Eisenstein attempted to restore in his interpretation of *Valkiria,* while working on Wagner's opera at the Bolshoi Theatre.[3] The idea of *undifferentiated wholeness* of social life, the director associated with the model of social integrity of tribal societies, was introduced by the structural ethnologists of his time and was manifested in Eisenstein's performances as the "choir model". The graphic element capable of representing the *pervobyt* atmosphere in imagery forms which Eisenstein chose was the rhythm of echo-motion, the waves of movement, as though radiated by the main character through the repetitious movements of the surrounding choir. Thus, by using a system of scenic echo-motions, Eisenstein attempted to (re)create the image of one entity or, as we may say, to visualize the Collective Body. The paradoxical and yet natural transformation of the individual protagonist into the collective protagonist was graphically achieved by the complex system of repeated and synchronized movements, like the Ripple effect after a stone is thrown in a pond. "The very principle of that [visual] connection has grown out of the rule of 'everyone's association with all' in scenic representation... This fits... the historical characters' psychology and outlook in this particular time... The historical epoch, in which I imagined *Valkiria,* was exactly the epoch of synthetic undifferentiating consciousness."[4] This statement coincides with Turner's definition of ritual as the identification system, the quoted earlier principle "one for all, and all for one", associated with the core of matrix identification. One can easily notice in his films' imagery throughout Eisenstein's career the results of Eisenstein's search of a graphic visualization of the "Collective Body"[5] Even though I will not focus on the films by Eisenstein (they belong to another historical period—1930-1940s), than that of this study, his experimentation with representation and comprehension of the masses by the means of cinema are important from a theoretical perspective. Eisenstein was also the first director who, along with Griffith, attempted to discover the visual imagery of the Collective Body and to comprehend it via ritual representation in cinema, as a form of modern philosophy.

Ivanov noted that Eisenstein's search for cinematic visual imagery (as well as of what is called here the Collective Body) was inspired by anthropological publications of his time: "The myth of aranta, to which Eisenstein often referred, represented for him the symbol of *pervobyt,* which he was reconstructing in his films and performances of these years."[6] As it was mentioned earlier, Ivanov discovered in Eisenstein's archive, closed by the Soviet censorship until recently, the director's detailed description of the myth of aranta with his own commentaries. The Australian myth of aranta *rella intarinja* (people grown together) explains the origin of the people on earth from undivided human entities interwoven as one body. As Ivanov pointed out, the special significance of this myth for the semiotics of culture had been stressed earlier by the influential German anthropologist Strehlov and also by the Russian (in Ivanov's terms) "predecessors of semiotics" Zolotarev and Freidenberg.[7] Eisenstein called Strehlov "the father of the myth of human clots—bundles of the fused creatures," and criticized Frazer for underestimating the archetypal significance of the "myth of aranta" in Frazer's system of cosmogonic myths (the first classification within the early semiotic anthropology of culture). The myth described what might have been the initial, most elementary projection of the Collective Body-concept: Zolotarev discussed the focal image of the myth as "the primary archaic entity that represented rudimentary 'people.' They did not have body parts, eyes, noses, ears and mouths, and were a kind of interwoven set of shapeless balloons, where the individual human body parts were only in an embryonic state."[8] In the symbolism of aranta Eisenstein saw a proof of his ideas of the primary undifferentiation, which he called "Grundproblem" and which he considered a generating key principle for film art, and a key signifier (image-meaning) in film semiotics and something deeply associated with the very poetic logic of metonymization and metaphorization.

Eisenstein directly referred to the myth of aranta while working before World War II on *Alexander Nevsky*. The film based on the national mythology, the heroic deeds of the Russian prince, a popular cultural hero. Made in 1938, the film was a representative ritual performance determined by the urgent ritual need to model/initiate the future warriors of the anticipated war. In *Alexander Nevsky* the two alternative types of collective entity were portrayed in cinematic forms using materials from Medieval history: 1) Russian warriors (a positive image, symbol of Russia's self-defense), and 2) German knights (a negative image, symbol of the potential enemy, fascist Germany). Eisenstein noted that the film represented the impersonal undifferentiated "regressive element—knighthood (fascism)."[9] This collective element is manifest in the image of a giant pig (the shape in which several military units of the knights formed when joining together for the fight). A symbolic giant pig was, in Eisenstein's words, an analog of the *pervobyt* which had degenerated into pathological forms at the latest stages of history. Apparently Eisenstein meant any totalitarian structure, rather than just the cult-type, collectivist formations of fascist Germany. Thus, the first cinematic representations of a collective unity was already dual, controversial and led to sharp philosophical discussion of the Collective Body's function in human history, ideology and culture.

Deliberation on the "myth of aranta" and its symbolic meaning led Eisenstein to formulate his main idea of film art—the *"Grundproblem,"* which is a key concept of his semiotic anthropology of cinema. Archaic regressive forms (associated with syncretism and undifferentiation), according to Eisenstein, are pathological when they remain unmodified at the subsequent stages of social history, but are highly efficient in art. He stressed the presence of adequate archaic forms (that of the unconscious), as well as their association with the content of new historical time (that of the conscious). In other words, for the efficiency of ritual structures in cinema, both ritual forms, and ritual content, actualized by modern issues are equally important.

**Master Plot: Ritual-Narrative Paradigm.** Another possible collaboration between ritual studies and film studies is manifest in the ritual-narrative paradigm, the function of which is re-differentiation within the Collective Body. The integration of the semiotics of ritual with narrative studies allows us to outline the transition from the paradigm of ritual to the metastructure of the plot, as a formalized metalanguage of story-telling. Without the ritual-narrative paradigm the Collective Body, as a form of metatheory, is not clarified as a dynamic model which can unfold within narrative structures. All of the characters involved in the ritual within the narrative plot, can be defined as the agents and elements of the Collective Body's structural-processual reorganization. Following Propp, many scholars, such as Greimas, Frye, Lotman, Clark proposed their version of the narrative paradigm. The version proposed in this thesis is based predominantly on works by Propp, on his morphology and anthropology of the plot, and is intended to emphasize the key structure of ritual within the structure of the plot. Discussion of the narrative metaplot is reinforced now in post-Turner anthropology by the theoretical developments in the semiotics of ritual, which were mentioned before. The one who is the initiand in the context of ritual becomes the hero in the context of narrative structures ("initiand/hero" further in the text). The scheme below shows the unity/integrity of the ritual process with the narrative metaplot. With all the differences between the two, the scheme emphasizes the intrinsic common integrity within both structures. In such a modified form, the master plot—the narrative-ritual paradigm may serve as a missing (and now re-connecting) link between anthropology and narrative studies (of film).

## The Structure of Master Plot:

Semantic Phases and Boundaries

***Beginning.*** Phase 1. **Something Happens: Breach,** in Turner's terms. The habitual environment manifests an unexpected gap/boundary within; it ceases to remain comprehensible to the inhabitants/community, implying social or environmental changes).

***Departure.*** Phase 2. **Hero needs to take actions/needs to go.** The ritual sacred journey begins. S/he departs from the habitual environment; the situation manifests a semantic quest—the system of meanings needs a repair/adjustment.

***Outerspace.*** Phase 3. **Initiand/hero reaches the "Outerspace"** (the "Forest," in Propp's semantics, there are other signifiers of the "otherspace /otherworld": castle, house, well, mirror, etc.). It is an alien environment, a strange incomprehensible semantic system where everything is different. This space may also be signified as the liminal space "between and betwixt," in Turner's terms.

***Secret Society.*** Phase 4. **Initiand/hero** finds a kind of alien society—inhabitants of the outerspace. He **contacts/joints their secret society** (Propp: "House in the Forest") and is tested and then accepted by it. The alien society is the society of the initiated: men, dwarfs, spirits, fairy creatures, animals, or other fantastic /magic entities (for example, a thinking planet like Solaris).

***Taboo and Violation.*** Phase 5. **The forest is the place of taboos:** there is an interdiction, prohibition—"The *Forbidden Room"* in the "House in the Forest," or nearby (on visiting a certain space, crossing the border, contacting strangers, etc.). Following his dated system of meanings, insufficient in the new environment, the initiand inevitably violates the taboo, thus preparing the need to transform and adopt new system of meanings. The Taboo and the Violation symbolize the external and internal sides of the boundary that separates the two different semantic spaces—the internal, familiar, and the external, "supernatural," so far incomprehensible to the initiand.

***Punishment.*** Phase 6. **Hero is penalized: he undergoes punishment** (falls asleep, dies, or is banished.) Here, the dissociative agents, such as dragons, monsters may come forward to inflict torture and pain, the disintegration of the symbolic death. This is a phase of dismembering, destruction of the initiand's previous "self," signified by Turner as the "dying from"—a departure from the obsolete system of meanings.

***Otherstate.*** Phase 7. **Hero enters an *"other-state"* and resides in the other-existence** (death, dream, sleep, trance, freeze, or another alternative state of the unconscious). The state of the *human plasm,* or *prima materia,* in Turner's terms, is achieved and activated at this stage. An autocatalytic process—that of rebirth and revival is generated at this stage signified by the moment of sacred donation.

*Donation/Sacred Instruction.* Phase 8. In the outer-space, the hero receives a sacred instruction. By getting out of the state of "other-existence," **hero returns to his own world** as a carrier of a new **sacred knowledge**. In this phase, signified by Turner as the "dying to," hero receives a vision/magic encounter and is given a sacred message. S/he gains a new **magic power** in the case of successful initiation/ritual; or remains stupid/ "profane"/ punished forever, in the state of failed initiation. Sacred Instruction provides access to the whole sphere of Sacred Knowledge—principally a new and much more complex system of meanings, which was inaccessible earlier and which can that can help the hero/community to find effective ways of survival in the new conditions.

*Return/Reward.* Phase 9. **Initiand/hero receives a reward** and/or **obtains a new social status** (becomes a king/princess), winning in the competition of life in the case of successful initiation /ritual; or dying in case of failed initiation/ritual. His/her personal goal of transformation—a psychological, spiritual and social growth—is achieved.

*Incorporation/Bliss.* Phase 10. **Society/community benefits from the return of the hero.** The world of his/her community obtains the bliss—the (temporal /eternal) harmony-for-all—as a result of one person's victory/initiation (actual until the next initiand has to undertake his ritual journey). The personal achievements of the hero, who is an essential integral part of the Collective Body and representing its matrix identity, simultaneously benefit to the whole society, transferring it onto a new level of well-being.

This scheme represents the general ritual paradigm as an ongoing metaplot, a deep structure which generated various narrative formulas. The proposed scheme is inspired by the works of Propp, and by integration of his early morphology with his latest anthropology of the fairy tale, as well as with Turner's ritual theory. The ritual-narrative paradigm represents a structural law in many narratives, although in particular stories some of the phases may be skipped or modified. However, it is the ritual need which is the generating force behind the formation of the ritual-narrative paradigm, determining the re-creation of the plot in the new stories, according to the modelling function of ritual. The ritual-narrative paradigm also reveals the focusing and integrating efforts of the Collective Body on the deep structure of any plot, because story-telling is a continuation of the ritual function. Matrix identity is manifest as one hero/initiand represents many—other similar stories, or performances of the same story, and all of them manifest the integral entity of the Collective Body. The key issue to be emphasized with respect to the ritual-narrative paradigm is that it represents and demonstrates the unfolding Collective Body in its integrity and multiple identity within the narrative process. Essentially—and it can be revealed only through the action—all the *dramatis personae,* paradigmatic figures/actants in terms of Propp or Greimas constitute one Collective Body: the hero, spirits (keepers of the sacred knowledge), the dragon/monster, the donor and the community (or: sender, subject, helper, object, receiver, opponent). The system of actants then represents an integrity of designated undifferentiative—dissociative—reintegrative functions and who are the agents within the Collective Body, responsible for its intrinsic change. A part of the Collective Body goes through a dramatic adjustment to new social, environmental, or semantic conditions, thus the whole can continue its effective development by the autocatalytic pulse of the never-ending ritual process. The identification of the cinematic action as a ritual meta-action, functioning through the ritual-narrative paradigm and the ultimate protagonist (the Collective Body), functioning as an integrative agent, are the theoretical factors that shape the legacy of the semiotic anthropology of cinema.

References to the phases, functions or agents of the ritual metaplot presented here will be made in the analysis of Soviet films in the terms presented above.[10] The distinction of the proposed here narrative paradigm is that it originated from the semiotics of ritual, rather than from narratology, and emphasizes stages of the ritual process as imprinted in the narrative structures: i.e. the metaplot represents a comparative study of ritual and story-telling, rather than various stories in their fictional semantics. Paradigmatic narrative structures are investigated in their connection with and origin from ritual—an approach stressed by Propp in his *Historical Roots of the Wondertale*.[11]

Each of the phases may be discussed in the context of semantic borders which the hero/ initiand needs to cross in order to gain a sacred knowledge and be transformed in a new entity (an approach emphasized by Lotman).[12] The issues of limit, boundary and frame in general represent some of the key concepts in film studies.[13] Each phase is separated from the following by a border that can be referred to as a semantic border. Each has its own distinct semiosphere. Something that a hero understands within one semantic space was incomprehensible to him within the frames/boundaries of a previous one. Knowledge available in one, is essentially unavailable in another—this is emphasized by the whole structure of ritual. The magic creatures are the guides who facilitate a hero's movement through the set of semantic boundaries. Thus, a ritual is a passage through a system of semantic spaces, separated by the system of boundaries. As the borders are solid and impenetrable, it takes a special circumstances, like magic, a superior assistance, shock, torture, near death experience, victory over a horrible monster or other extreme actions to overcome the borders between the semantic spaces. Thus, frames in the context of ritual are emphasized and shown as closely connected with a shift in the macrosemantic field, with obtaining knowledge of a qualitatively different order.

Knowledge obtained on a new, higher level is ultimately unimaginable, incomprehensible, unavailable and unreachable from prior semantic spaces, less complex on the scale of "ordinary—magic," "natural to supernatural." The movement along this scale is signified and emphasized by the movement of a hero along the line of the story. Ritual is a process designed to facilitate one's journey in the macrosemantic field—from the inside of one's semantic universe to its outside—something that a regular person cannot do on his own: by definition one cannot know what is beyond one's comprehension. There is an intrinsic paradox that the ritual-narrative paradigm is designed to demonstrate and resolve: if an individual were capable of reaching understanding, which seems to be situated outside his semiosphere, that would mean that he is still inside, within his semiosphere, but that its borders are larger than he had earlier thought. This would be a journey to the boundaries of one's semiosphere, but not across them. Traveling across, beyond one's semantic boundaries requires a special arrangement—a drastic transformative procedure of enormous intensity, of which ritual is one possible form. That is why the assistance of magic helpers, supernatural beings, which are the signifiers of the external semiosphere, is essential in the ritual process: they create special circumstances for the initiand to penetrate the borders and obtain knowledge, usually essential for his and the Collective Body's survival, adaptation and development, but previously unavailable, unreachable for him.

Ritual is a system that reflects upon the paradoxical integrity between the semantic inside and outside. Remaining inside a certain semantic system, one cannot obtain a picture, a vision from the outside of this very system—this perspective is logically unavailable. The very notion of vision (or voices, in Tuzin's study)[14] signifies the perspective and (audio-visual) communication from the semantic outside. Ritual usually models such a situation when the initiand gradually crosses the paradoxical point (as in a Møebius strip) where the inside transforms into, or has a channel with, the outside. (The latter is signified as other worlds, a beyond; which indeed is a "beyond" to this system of meanings). Phases of the ritual process inscribed into a narrative structure mark separated semantic spaces and stops, checkpoints on the hero's journey through the semantic macrospace. The ritual paradigm ultimately represents the Ritual Journey as a narrative metaplot; the journey through the diverse semantic spaces unfolds the multidimensional chronotope of the world. Sacred knowledge is obtained as a result of the death-rebirth and the ritual journey and symbolizes information vital for the survival and development of the Collective Body, which is reflected as the ultimate goal of the narrative metaplot. This information—*sacra*—is unavailable to any individual within his single perspective, especially to one uninitiated. The metaplot of initiation becomes then a sacred journey to and through the distant semantic fields, for the sake of superior perspectives, thus preparing a single person for the polyphonic panorama of the Collective Body's vision and the system of meanings of Great Time.

**Ritual Naming and Taboo: Word as Action.** The ritual process also embraces *ritual naming,* manifest in the film's titles, names of the places, objects or heroes, syntagmatically or paradigmatically signified in terms of ritual symbolism. The *word* *given*, a film title, often functions as a ritual signifier with regards to the entire content of the film. The film title in this context may be referred to as a *ritual name*, or more exactly, ritual signification—a form of the ritual action. The issue of ritual naming and taboo is relevant to understanding the connection between words and the processes the words signify, as well as the ritual meaning of the cinematic action. Lessa notes that speech (spells, prayers, chants) comprises an integral part of ritual behavior, as much as gesture and the manipulation of objects.[15] Ritual naming appears inseparable from the ritual action in such films as *It, Whiskers, Andrei Roublev, Mirror, Scarecrow, Die-Freeze-Revive!, Repentance, Sacrifice, Solaris, The Viola Sonata.* In the latter, music—the creator of the film's cathartic montage, can be regarded as a creative form of incantation. In *It,* the object of the 'black magic' which has affected Russian history has to be named and therefore—found. Otherwise Russian history would never be free from the evil spell and from misfortune.[16] According to Leach, "When man attaches a particular category word to a class of objects he *creates* that class of objects. If an object has no name it is not recognized as an object and in a social sense "it does not exist."[17] The creation of the world, and the very act of creation, "is mythologized as a list of names attached to persons, places, animals and things. The world is created by the process of classification and the repetition of the classification of itself perpetuates the knowledge which it incorporates."[18] The ritual function of classification is vividly manifest, for example, in *Scorpion's Gardens.* The film titles and the film heros' names represent ritual naming which functions as a signifying system and a creation of a new reality.

"Magical spells are, like oratory, a method of metaphorical persuasion. The spirits cannot be coerced, but they can be influenced, to comply with human desires. They may be frightened or threatened, coaxed or coddled, but no one can be sure they will obey. There is no single fixed form for a magical performance, no correct or certain set of expressions, images, or commands."[19] This leaves a rich sphere of initiative, innovation and creativity for filmmakers. Ivanov noted that the significance of oral verbal expression as an integral part of the ritual process was developing gradually with the development of ritual structures. Ritual naming was also emphasized by Freidenberg as a significant cultural process, and proposed by Ivanov as an integral part of the anthropology of cinema.[20] Both ritual naming and taboo are connected with the *sacra,* and in the context of cinema, with the revelation of the *sacra* in the film-ritual. Ritual naming may be defined as a revelation of something that could not be seen from the perspective of a single person; ritual taboo manifests something that should not be seen, or comprehended until a special moment comes—that of the sacred instruction. In both instances, ritual naming and ritual taboo represent the controversy and dialectics of the perspective of a single person/single moment and the superior polyphonic vision (whole knowledge) of the Collective Body and Great Time.

**Cinematic Montage and Ritual Catharsis.** What is in common between ritual ecstasy, dramatic catharsis and cinematic montage? They all are united by *cathartic structure*—an elevation of emotional energy which is meant to result in a psycho-physiological discharge. This protomodel *for* the metastructure of ritual death-rebirth is manifest in ritual ecstasy, in cathartic dance, in cathartic montage and in montage as a cathartic dance of the cinema. In his studies on the anthropology of cinema, Eisenstein expressed an interest in the origins of ritual ecstasy and organizations of ecstatic compositions in cinema with respect to the development of montage and its metalanguage. This theoretical connection, emphasized and discussed by Ivanov,[21] allows us to hypothesize that cinematic montage can be considered part of a larger pattern—cathartic structure—something which has significance for culture in general, and which responds to the basic human need of emotional elevation, transformation and discharge. Therefore, such categories as *cathartic dance, cathartic structure, ecstatic structure, ecstasy, montage* may be considered part of a larger context, that of ***ritual catharsis.***

Ritual dance is essentially an ecstatic and cathartic dance.[22] Montage often manifests the ecstasy of cinema as a ritual action. The energy of montage—an ecstatic dance of the cinema—may be used to unlock the semantic labyrinth, to solve a puzzle of space by the means of movement, to overcome the boundaries of meanings with the intrinsic energy of ecstasy. Cathartic dance is a form of problem-solving, a reconfiguration of the spellbound space; it is a search for a channel for sacred communication. By mimicking the labyrinth, the circle, the ecstatic dance frees the tornado-like energy of movement, which signifies the trance, the flight, the elevation towards the level of sacred connection. The cinematic montage (editing) contains elements of the ecstatic /cathartic dance; these elements may be found in various films, such as *The Viola Sonata, It, Repentance, Mirror, Scorpion's Gardens.* Catharsis, a traditional component of ritual, may be considered a protostructure of ecstasy in art in general. Cathartic montage and montage composition in general within the cinematic structure may be considered equivalent to cathartic dance within ritual structure. It may be assumed that cathartic structure is authentic psychological protostructure for desired ecstasy and represents emotional discharge in the forms of art. This "cathartic quest" or "cathartic condition" resulted in various forms of cathartic dances, singing, drama and montage in later developments in art.

In cathartic dance, the body of a ritual dancer is moving rhythmically, writing with its movements the circles of ecstatic composition, while the surrounding reality, including the spectators, remains immobile. Montage in cinema is a form of dance—the "inverse cathartic dance"—where the segments of reality are moving rhythmically, with increasing power in order to reach a climax, while the body of the viewer—subject to the cathartic reaction—remains immobile. In the cathartic dance the ritual dancer revolves himself around the world (symbolized by the pivotal point of the ritual circle), while in the (cathartic) montage, the world revolves around the spectator. In both the illusion of the revolving world is achieved, but the points-of-view are in opposition. If we recall that the ritual condition in both structures requires participants to be simultaneously actors and viewers, then the difference in the point-of-view becomes insignificant, while the similarity between the two rises to the fore. In cinema, ecstatic composition and the energy of pathos (in Eisenstein's words) which are manifest in montage, make the world move around the magic point of ritual, by arranging the concentration of time/space characteristic for the ritual as a time of creation.

Cinematic montage and ecstatic compositions in cinema play an extremely significant role in structuring the film along the lines of the ritual process. In cinema, the 'tornado of ecstasy' is produced not by the moving/dancing body, but by the moving /dancing camera. The camera replaces the cathartic dancer; both represent the state of creation of the cosmos (world) from chaos. The audience in both types of performance is immobile but, at the same time, paradoxically and powerfully involved in the movement. The movement acquires symbolic quality of *sacred movement* and *creation,* carrying within this pure energy of creation and a generative model of autocatalysis—the birth of meaning from naught, from silence, and from death. In the state of montage, the world's state of separation, *betwixt and between,* symbolic death and disintegration are emphasized. As it is typical for this liminal stage of ritual, in the dark area, negative semantic space, all dated meanings and notions are altered and shown to fail, to be irrelevant to reality. The symbolic space of ritual separation is inhibited by fears, tortures, dismembered bodies (dismembering of the body—Bunuel's classic "cutting the eye with a razor" scene, and other related symbolism). The monsters (vampires, dinosaurs, aliens, gargoyles, corpses, serial killers, etc., in the modern edition, with the special versions for kids, *Are You Afraid of the Dark* and *Goosebumps*), have a special function with respect to cinematic suspense and montage. The cinematic experience in general is a form of ritual symbolic death, but avant-garde cinema, particularly, focuses on the forms of disintegration and dissociation. It is precisely what thrillers, surrealist and avant-garde cinema tend to achieve—to reproduce the *pre-transformative liminal* stage—that of separation within the ritual death-rebirth process.

**Ritual Death in/as Cinema.** The epoch of cinema, or the life time of film as a cultural form, is just a brief moment on the large historical scale. The question whether there was cinematic experience 'before Time,' or cinema before cinema, is not as rhetorical as it seems. The *ritual condition*—that of the individual submerged into obscurity and immobility, "the long trial of lying motionless" in the "fruitful darkness" (in Turner's terms) to become open for sacred communication—is strikingly suggestive of the *cinematic condition.* The initiand is in the darkness alone. The boundaries between illusion and reality gradually disappear. The mysterious stream of light is projected above and into his head. It reaches his inner sight and the big picture appears, having the whole world unfolding in it. The initiand remains immobile, but he, himself is not outside any longer, the ritual boundary shifts and he finds himself inside the big projected picture. Merging with the perfect hero/heroine in the moving picture, s/he enters the world of adventure, starts his/her journey, wins the enemy and obtains the gift—the princess/prince, magic object, sacred knowledge, etc. Somehow, the initiand feels that he and the perfect hero in his imagination are the same—one body, one person; the identification is complete. He is immobile, but simultaneously he is moving somewhere, on the ritual journey together with the hero. The time of the presentation is limited, but the initiand may be traveling with the hero months, even years. As a result, he attains the revelation, the new vision, the new understanding of things, and exits out of the experience as a completely new person, a new social being—more mature, more aware of his new responsibilities, status, stage within his life circle and of his cultural heritage, the most important spiritual values of his people.

In terms of symbolic anthropology, the very phenomenon of cinematic experience may be considered a form of symbolic ritual death. This issue is extremely important for understanding the very nature of ritual, which, as shown above, is a focal issue for the anthropology of cinema. Violence, death, disintegration and pain have been always the issues that cinema as a cultural phenomenon has focused on and developed around. Shock has been incorporated in the cinematic experience in various ways, by the directors of various trends throughout the whole history of cinema. According to Russian cultural tradition (cinematic, as well as literary), "true art should be difficult" to affect human souls. In cinema "high art" (avant-garde) and "true art" (antitotalitarian) are supposed to orient the audience towards pain rather than pleasure. This theorization of the impact of culture and cinema directly indicates the transformative goals inscribed into a film structure, which is an heir of ritual tradition. Bunuel's famous episode with an eye and razor, as well as the mysteries of Hitchcock reproduce the stage of symbolic death—dismembering and disintegration. Radical cinematic strategies restore the ritual action on the unconscious level of culture. They facilitate revitalization of the important process associated with the transformation of the modern viewer's ego and its development towards spiritual maturity.

"Dissociation," in Turner's terms, and *constructive deconstruction,* in terms of poststructuralism, as well as other interrelated devices of modern art manifest various modalities of ritual death. The avant-garde film persistently took upon itself the function of cinematic 'aggression' and 'provocation' in the mode of cinematic form. While mainstream cinema with its fixation on mysteries and murder, manifests a ritual symbolic death in the modes of content. The study of film in the context of anthropology may reveal such manifestations of the ritual structure as *temporary death*, *dying from* and *dying to*, demonstrating the hidden transformative meaning of cinematic communication.

Many cinematic modalities, typically being theorized within the context of the phenomenology of cinema, can be reconsidered in the context of the anthropology of cinema. Thus, for example, suspense may be reinterpreted in the context of ritual need as a necessary phase of "dying from." As a separating stage of ritual, suspense provides dissociative operations on the deepest levels of the unconscious. This stage, however, has to be followed by the catharsis—the high point of the "dying to," the next stage of the ritual reintegration. Interestingly, the connection of suspense with the catharsis was emphasized as early as in 1911 in the insightful work of W.D. Moriarth.[23] The importance of the catharsis with respect to the Collective Body, may be supported by the work of Scheff, who associated the function of catharsis with the reintegration of the individual into the community.[24] Characteristically, the connection of suspense with catharsis, so profoundly manifested in ritual, has been lost in postmodern culture, on levels of both, film practice and film theory.[25]

**Provocation, Aggression and Transformation in Cinema.** The first stage of ritual was studied exhaustively by Western anthropology, particularly by Van Gennep (as *separation)*, by Turner (as *breach*) and the followers of processual symbolic analysis. Suspense, for instance, can be referred to as a form of provocation, which follows and reinforces the stage of defamiliarization. Defamiliarization-provocation-suspense represent an interconnected and escalating process, characteristic for both ritual and cinema. It is intended to contribute to the effectiveness of the separation stage on the human psyche through all its levels, characteristically affecting it from the bottom to the top (from the unconscious via subconscious, reaching out to the level of consciousness, which often cannot rationalize the experience until it is over). Suspense provokes and actualizes the alarm reaction on the deepest psychological levels, preparing the psyche for communication with the unknown. Characteristically, something outside and below routine social semantics—the microsigns, the smallest, hardly noticeable unusual details—become extremely important at this stage, anticipating the state of disintegration and supporting the survival of the social self. Suspense may be linked to the first phase in the transformative process—descending/reversing of the one to be initiated (as well as the audience—community) back into the pre-hierarchical state, that of the *prima materia,* "human cells." Responses on the cellular level are provoked and stimulated at this ritual stage. Mysterious deconstructive agents manifest themselves as characters in the thriller movie. Provocation and aggression, shocking for common people mean the purposeful ritual deconstruction of established social/moral/psychological status quo of the ones to be open for the rite of passage and for donation of sacred knowledge. In the case studies of Soviet films, as will be shown below, the aspects of aggression and provocation—a shock as a crucial part of the cinematic deconstructive process—will play an exceptionally significant role.

According to the ritual logic of metamorphosis as a *model of/for* change, one should necessarily die (symbolically) in order to revive in a new quality, to undergo a harmonizing transformation. The destruction of socio-semantic units of a highly structured society demands special means: the stronger a structure, the more powerful the methods of its disintegration have to be—proportionally unpredictable and forceful to the degree of the elements' cohesion. Using Lotman's concept 'culture and explosion,' one can say that the *film-ritual* type of artistic actions creates a set of micro-explosions within a given culture. Montage—a key device of the cinematic meaning-making process—plays an essential role in the creation of the cathartic structure. Film-ritual contributes to the community's antistructural connection and profound collective catharsis, which facilitates a periodical reunion on a non-hierarchical basis—the transformation of all within the Collective Body. The ritual death in cinema incorporates the functions of cinematic aggression, as a mean of disintegration among the socio-semantic units, and cinematic provocation, forcing units out of their structural cells. The Collective Body of people cannot survive and give birth to new generations purely as/in a mode of a structured society; it has to keep its own value as a sacred community. An organized society, with its politics, ideologies, hierarchies represents another type of unity and order than that of the Collective Body, usually intersecting with the latter, but in some situations constituting an alternative to it. To survive in time and space, the Collective Body has to balance between the modes of structure and antistructure (in Turner's terms), growing through their boundary and restoring itself within the both. The structural order and its inhabitants—*structural beings*—have to periodically *ritually die* in order to be revived as a whole—a living entity of kinship, of brotherhood. Within the development of a highly structured hierarchical society the ritual performance—and a modern film-ritual as its modality—ultimately is constantly restored by inner cultural mechanisms to fulfill the ritual needs of the community. Cinema functions in modern societies as an ultimate agent of the sacred communication with the mode of the Collective Body. The film-goers, *structural beings,* fulfill their profound ritual and psychological need by symbolically dying in the darkness of a movie theatre where they 'come out' from their structural cells, at least temporarily, and restore their sense of freedom, immortality, transformation and wholeness with the Collective Body, unreachable in every day life. Spiritual growth is the ultimate aim of cinematic experience as a modern form of symbolic death-rebirth.

Film carnival also belongs to a sphere of the anthropology of cinema. Partially, it will be touched upon in the analysis of the film *Scorpion's Gardens,* which represents a high form of parody. As a theoretical area, carnival, with its independent significance and enormous bibliography, based on Bakhtin's theory of carnival, its intentionally omitted in the dissertation for the sake of less studied aspects of ritual performance. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the logic of paradox, of the **ritual symbolic inversion** (studied by Bakhtin, Lotman, V. Ivanov, Babcock, Turner, etc.) and the figure of ritual fool (holy fool/trickster/shaman) have exceptional importance for the sphere of cinema.[26] By constantly crossing the boundaries, sending mixed messages and establishing bordering intersected areas of meanings, the liminal persona constitutes a system of third—provocative-alternative—meanings within the established system of binary oppositions. By doing this, the archetypal ritual fool, represented for example by Chaplin's tradition, recreates a ritual condition and, specifically, modalities of symbolic death-rebirth, disintegration and transformation in cinema. He facilitates the acceptance of the sacred message, which is hard to accept as common sense because it is essentially beyond and above the habitual and predictable perspective of the non-initiated mind.[27] Although the dissertation will not focus on this issue in detail, the abundance of the ritual fool figures in Soviet movies, particularly in the filmtexts under discussion should be emphasized, for example, the heroines of *Scarecrow* and *Repentance,* all the people as a fool in *It,* the poor Jewish father in *Commissar,* protagonists in various films by Tarkovsky, Riazanov, Ovcharov, Mamin, etc. Interestingly (and a whole new topic possible for research) the author-filmmaker constructs and projects his own self-image as a ritual fool, onto the protagonist or the whole narrative space, as can be seen in various filmtexts such as *Andrei Roublev, Stalker, It, Scorpion's Gardens, The Viola Sonata* and *Repentance*—an issue deserving special attention and deep-rooted in the ongoing theme in Russian culture, "author/artist as *yurodivy*—God's fool."

A modern initiand—the one experiencing ritual death in the darkness of a movie theatre—fits perfectly Turner's transcultural paradigm of the threshold 'liminal persona,' or "structurally indefinable 'transitional being."[28] Investigation of the phenomenology of the *cinematic experience* is fully in line with Turner's main conclusions regarding the sacred ritual zone *'betwixt and between,'*—that of *'structural invisibility'*—as well as with studies of its semiosphere and functions. The ritual, according to Turner's anthropology of performance and anthropology of experience, is inseparable from the dramatic/processual mode of social life and, therefore, films as ritual actions are proven to be a function of this mode, of the *social drama.*

Cinema, a new and highly effective form of ritual experience, is deeply connected with the chronotope of the ritual, particularly with its liminal space/time dimension (threshold-time)[29] and with the very chronotope of the Collective Body. The most recent dominant film theory, which combines Marxist and psychoanalytical approaches, is based on the assumption that the dreaming state and sexual desire are the private affair of the individual-monad, and that society's influence is manifest through intrusive ideological control. The Collective Body theory allows us to reconsider the major paradigm of film theory and to look at the cinematic experience of sexual desire as a collective agenda and at cinema's construction of a social unity as a controversial and multifaceted process rather than purely aggressive brainwashing.

Anthropology of cinema is not meant as a new universal film theory designed to displace all previous film theories. The two leading American film theoreticians, Bordwell and Carroll recently introduced their new conception of "post-theory", which proves that there is an urgent need for a system of film theories rather than one totalizing all-explaining approach. The semiotic anthropology of cinema is introduced here as a necessary part of the future multidisciplinary systematic study of cinema and its cultural function. The sources and questions discussed above suggest theoretical paradigms and methods for the transformation of the *phenomenology of cinema* into the *anthropology of cinema* as an integral part of modern film theory, as well as cultural theory. Semiotic anthropology is called for a reason the *algebra of culture*. As a form of metascience, it can provide methods and ideas for film studies and multidisciplinary studies of cultural mechanisms. The semiotic anthropology of cinema, therefore, should integrate in the future all of the above-mentioned methods, taking advantage of: 1) mistakes and misconceptions in film theory (fads and fallacies, in Carroll's terms),[30] as well as the initial cultural controversies which generated them; 2) insights of the anthropologists who define ritual as a paradigmatic cultural phenomenon; 3) developments in the related fields of film studies—performance and drama theory, as well as narratology with respect to the ritual process; 4) major theories of culture, as well as cultural maps and macrocultural models (particularly, those of the semiotics of culture) generated by various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences.

The major function of the film-ritual, as a form of "ritual magic" with its magmatic transformative impact (Schechner), is to bridge the unbridgeable gap within the society (Malinowski) and, as a "redressive action", to overcome the breach of the developing social drama (Turner).[31] The further analysis will show how the ritual structure and the representation of the paradigmatic protagonist, the Collective Body, in various filmtexts contribute to the transformative ritual process in Soviet and post-Soviet culture(s).

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[1] Clyde Kluckhohn, "Myths and Rituals: A General Theory," 69.

[2] For more on this matter, see Armes, *Action and Image: Dramatic Structure in Cinema.*

[3] As Eisenstein remarked, he always tried to emphasize in his films the presence of "the collective and the mass... the likeness of a chorus, merging into a collective personage and artistic image." Quoted from *The Battleship Potemkin,* ed. Herbert Marchall (New York, 1978), 28.

[4] Here and further in this section, the quotations from Eisenstein are from Ivanov, *Essays on the History of Semiotics in the USSR,* 85-87.

[5] Quoted by Ivanov, *Essays in the History of Semiotics in the USSR,* 86.

[6] See such films, as *Strike, October, The Battleship Potemkin, Bezhin Meadow, Alexander Nevsky* and *Ivan the Terrible.*

[7] On the mythology of aranta (in English "Aranda") see more, for example, Haxley, *The Way of the Sacred,* 118-30.

[8] See C. Strehlov, "Die Arenda-und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral Australien," in *Mythen, Sagen, Märchen, ed.* I. Teil (Frankfurt am Main, 1907), and Olga Freidenberg, *Poetika siuzheta i zhanra* (Hereafter: The Poetics of Plot and Genre) (Moscow, 1936), 363. Ivanov stresses the significance of Zolotarev's discovery of the binary opposition as an organizing principle of mythology, made before Levi-Strauss. Zolotarev's manuscript, written in the 1930s, is in Soviet archives, and still remains unpublished.

[9] Quoted by Ivanov, *Essays in the History of Semiotics in the USSR,* 86.

[10] Ibid.

[11] The symbolic names for various phases are derived from Propp, *Morphology of the Folk Tale* and *Historical Roots of the Wondertale.* This scheme is generally inspired by Propp's both morphology and anthropology of fairy tale and Lotman and Ivanov's conceptions of semantic frames/boundaries. The ritual process as a protostructure for performance is derived from Turner's anthropology of performance. This scheme also corresponds with Clark's "Master Plot" of Novel of the Stalin Era, which consists of the following six stages: Prologue or Separation, Setting up the Task, Transition, Climax, Incorporation (Initiation), Finale (Celebration of Incorporation). See her *The Soviet Novel,* 255-60.

[12] Propp in his book, *Historical Roots of the Wondertale* (1946), was concerned with the investigation of the ritual roots of the modern narrative systems via those of wondertales, rather than a priority of ritual over myth/story or vice versa—a popular question for anthropology and literary criticism of that time. Propp emphasized the following units of the paradigmatic metaplot that correspond with the semantic units of ritual: Plot, Mysterious Forest, Big House, Magic Gifts, Transition, At the Fire River, Beyond the Thirty Ninth Lands ("Beyond" or "Otherworld" in Russian folklore), Fiancee.

[13] See, Yuri Lotman, ed. *Struktura i semiotika khudozhestvennogo teksta. Raboty po semioticheskim*

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*sistemam* (The Structure and Semiotics of Literary Text. Works on Semiotic Systems XII.). In Russian. (Tartu, 1981), and Yuri Lotman, *The Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1990).

[14] For other important aspects of montage, frame, boundary and limit in cinema, see, for example, Ivanov, *Essays in the History of Semiotics in the USSR* and Yuri Lotman, *Film Semiotics* (Ann Arbor, 1976). In American film scholarship, Hedge proposed a concept of the cognitive frame. In the Introduction, she wrote: "If we imagine a mental construct as a "frame," then the presentation of novel material that encourages the perceiver to modify those constructs may be seen as a kind of "frame-breaking." Whatever its form, frame-breaking goes against the expectation of the perceiver. The concept of "frames" provides a schema within which one can begin to explain the shifts in perception that many art works seek to achieve." Hedges also stressed that "transient identifications with the characters of fiction continue to influence personal development" of the film spectator. Inez Hedge, *Breaking the Frame: Film Language and the Experience of Limits* (Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1991), 107.

[15] See Tuzin, "Miraculous Voices."

[16] Lessa, *Reader in Comparative Religion*, 220. See also on the same issue, Ivanov, *Essays in the History of Semiotics in the USSR*, Freidenberg, *The Poetics of Plot and Genre*, and S.J. Tambiah, "The Magical Power of Words," *Man* (3:2 1968), 175-208.

[17] See my "Find the Magic Word" in *Re-Entering the Sign: Articulating New Russian Culture*.

[18] Leach, "Ritualization in Man," 231.

[19] Ibid. See also on this, the Russian philosopher and leading scholar in the studies of symbol, Alexei Losev, *Filosofiia imeni* (The Philosophy of Name) (Moscow, 1927), *Problema simvola i realisticheskoe iskusstvo* (The Problem of Symbol and Realist Art) (Moscow, 1976), and *Filosofiia. Myfologiia. Kul'tura* (Philosophy, Mythology, Culture) (Moscow, 1991).

[20] Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Jane Monning Atkinson, "Man the Hunter and Woman: Metaphors for the Sexes in Ilongot Magical Spells," in *Reader in Comparative Religion*, 132.

[21] Ivanov, *Essays in the History of Semiotics in the USSR*, 33.

[22] Ibid.

[23] For more on the cathartic dance, see I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession*. 2nd edition (London & New York, 1989).

[24] W.D. Moriarth, *The Function of Suspense in the Catharsis*, (Ann Arbor, 1911). In the context of the ritual mechanism of death-rebirth, the five fundamental characteristics of suspense stressed by Moriarth should be mentioned: "physical tension, alertness, alteration, the accumulation of reserve energy, and in proportion as the suspense is effective, the unification of all the powers of the organism... These constitute a sufficient basis for investigating the function of suspense in the catharsis," 13.

[25] See Thomas J. Scheff, *Catharsis in Healing, Ritual and Drama* (Berkeley, 1979).

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[26] Among the many theoretical issues associated with suspense, catharsis is not mentioned in the recent collection, Peter Vorderer, et al. eds., *Suspense: Conceptualizations, Theoretical Analysis, and Empirical Explorations* (Mahwah, NJ., 1996).

[27] The issue of ritual fool in modern cinema will be explored in detail in my subsequent post-doctoral research. On the semiotic-anthropological aspects of the holy/ritual fool's functions in culture, see my "Towards the Anthropology of *Yurodivost:* Sources and Methods in Current Research."

[28] For the general understanding of the ritual fool as an agent of change in culture—a topic potentially important for film theory—see bibliography and my classification of the current trends and methods in the study of the ritual fool in general, and of the Russian holy fool, in particular, in my "Towards the Anthropology of *Yurodivost.*"

[29] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 95.

[30] Besides Turner, the concept of "threshold-time" was emphasized, with respect to Bakhtin's writings and modern literature, by Lisa Eckstrom, "Moral Perception and the Chronotope: The Case of Henry James," in *Bakhtin in Contexts.*

[31] Noel Carroll, *Mystifying Movies: Fads an Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory.* See also David Bordwell and Noël Carroll, *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies.*

[32] More on these issues, see Bronislaw Malinowski, "The Role of Magic and Religion" in *Reader in Comparative Religion,* and Turner, *Anthropology of Performance.*

# PART II. Soviet Films: the Perspective of Interpretive Anthropology

Chapters 4-5 of part II (study of the films *Commissar, Little Vera, Repentance, Scarecrow,* and *Freeze-Die-Revive!*) are focused on the ritual context in Soviet films, employing the method of motif analysis rather than text analysis. Chapters 6-7 of part II (study of the films *The Viola Sonata, Scorpion's Gardens, Prison Romance* and *Andrei Roublev*) are intended as filmtext analyses from the perspective of film studies, studies of Soviet culture and semiotics. Although the general method of the thesis remains the semiotic anthropology of cinema, ritual criticism and discussion of the ritual motifs will be emphasized in the chapters 4-5, while a semiotic approach with the focus on ritual and metatextuality will be emphasized in the chapters 6-7.

The goal of this chapter is not a complete, detailed analysis of the movies under discussion, but rather a (re)signification of the films' narratives and motifs from the perspective of ritual semantics and the concept of the Collective Body. It is a double test: to discover how the plots of the well-known movies extensively discussed by the critics and scholars can reveal new dimensions within the perspective of semiotic anthropology, and whether the methods of the latter are applicable to the studies of modern films. The issues of the films' visual imagery, which can be extremely useful for understanding their ritual semantics, is omitted in the present study (and will possibly be developed in another work) to limit the analysis to one problematic, the ritual motifs. The film analysis in the following chapters is not intended to challenge other possible interpretations of the films, but to add to the existing readings an additional dimension—that of interpretive anthropology and ritual criticism. This part will focus on the representation of life-crisis situations—the *models of/for* rites of passage—as well as the ritual of affliction, the influence of the indestructable ideological past on the present and the future. In Turner's terms, most films to be discussed in the dissertation represent the *drums of affliction*—healing rituals designed to free the space of culture from the shades of totalitarian consciousness.

This part will also explore diverse representations of the Collective Body as an integral protagonist in Soviet films and the system of its dynamic signifiers. Not only does a film-ritual represent the Collective Body image, it actualizes and activates the Collective Body as a ritual symbol. As a cultural text, a film-ritual reinforces the power field of dominant ritual symbols in culture. Analysis of the Collective Body image in such films as *Scarecrow, The Viola Sonata, Scorpion's Gardens* and *Andrei Roublev* will show the forms of its activation as a dominant ritual symbol in culture. Functioning as a metastructure, via the processes of de-condensation and de-unification (opposite to condensation and unification, defined by Turner as the main functions of the dominant symbol), a film-ritual transmits meanings from the orbit of the dominant symbol. It re-directs them into circulation within the wide spectrum of cultural and social life, diversifying and disseminating related image-symbols. However, polarization (the third active process of the dominant symbol) is reinforced within the initial stage of a film-ritual by its strong emphasis on conflict, characteristic for drama. Eventually the attention shifts to polarization, an outcome of the breach, which is essentially overcome by the film-ritual as a redressive action, particularly by the cathartic discharge within the film structure. Reflecting and manifesting the state of breach (dated model), as well as projecting a state of conflict resolution (advance/perspective model), through the redistribution of symbols and meanings, a film-ritual effectively (or, ineffectively, if it does not achieve a true state of ritual) functions as both *models of* and *models for* cultural process. And from this perspective, emphasized by Geertz, Turner and Grimes, the films can become a subject for ritual criticism and interpretive anthropology.

# Chapter 4: Rituals of Birth, Fertility and Death: *Commissar, Little Vera, Repentance*

The chapter discusses the "**Birth—Conception/Intercourse—Death**"—the **three major acts in the Collective Body's drama**, in terms of Bakhtin. They also represent rites of passage, main life-crisis rituals, that of birth, fertility and death.[1] The films to be explored provide vivid materials for the study of the transformation of meanings of birth, motherhood and dying in totalitarian and post-totalitarian cultures. The three trademarks of *glasnost*, shown the world over—*Commissar, Little Vera* and *Repentance*—will be analyzed in this chapter.[2]

It is characteristic for these three famous *perestroika* movies, however highly unusual for the previous periods of Soviet cinema, that the key figures of the narrative structure are physical bodies rather than characters. The action in all three plots revolves around bodies: a ***new-born body***, a ***copulating/love-making body*** and a ***dead body***. All three film narratives are entirely impossible without the bodily aspects of the key personages. The shift from the "character" to the "body" as the principal subject matter and pivotal point of cinematic action was a highly indicative phenomenon. This shift in Soviet film culture was conditioned by the total disintegration of the system of characters, reflecting a collapse of the Soviet system of meanings as a whole. The official system of social roles and "psychological types" that was integrated into the metalanguage of Soviet ideology has dominated culture for a long time. In cinema it proved to be nothing but a set of artificial ideological constructs, intended to prescribe people their designated social behavior. In the condition of post-Soviet semantic vacuum and loss of axiological orientation, the cinema of *perestroika* turned to the basic matters of life, to the physicality of human existence as unquestionable reality.[3] From this standpoint, film culture introduced and theorized corporeality, the biological meaning of life as a level of semantization—something inevitably leading to the problematics of the Collective Body.

## Birth Ritual: *Commissar*

*Commissar* (*Komissar*, 1967/1988) by Alexandr Askoldov, a film banned in the Soviet Union for twenty years, is an example of the power of ritual symbolism in Russian culture.[4] The very title, *Commissar*, means in Russian a political/ideological mentor in the Red Army military units during the Civil War—the warriors' "sacred instructor," in the Soviet system of meanings. It should be stressed that the figure of a sacred instructor plays an extremely important role in the existence and development of the Collective Body. And the question "who is the sacred instructor?"—what type, class, gender, age, group has s/he emerged from—remains a highly critical signification in every culture in terms of ideology. In the word "commissar," the root "com" indicates its origin from the group of notions associated with the "common," "community," "*communitas*," and therefore refers to the Collective Body.[5] Thus, the main character, a young strong peasant woman, is signified by the film's title as a "community leader," a sacred instructor, who proves in the course of film to be a false one that leads people in the wrong direction.[6] The film narrates a story of failed motherhood and one woman's choice between the war and her child. The film's protagonist, who later turns out to also be its antagonist, is Klavdia Avilova—an expectant mother, or more accurately, the Mother.[7] Klavdia, a pregnant female commissar, is left behind by the retreating Red Army in a small village, in the care of a poor Jewish family. After giving birth to her baby boy, Klavdia leaves him for good with the big Jewish family, choosing to continue the battle along the roads of war. Nonna Mordiukova, a famous Soviet actress with a big masculine body, down-to-earth style and the charisma of a cultural heroine—a *woman of the people*—openly plays Commissar as a symbol rather than a character. Her frozen-like body language and strong movements are reminiscent of some epic image-symbol, a Scythian stone idol from the wild Russian steppes. The mythological image of the woman-commissar symbolizes the Russian national character, its fertility and its unexhausted power.[8] Her personage is the symbolic Mother-of-all—Mother-Russia—who in the controversial film narrative abandons her child, the progeny for the sake of the political struggle. It was bad enough that the film offered a positive representation of the biological Collective Body, the kinship at its best—healthy, caring and loving—personified by a Jewish family. What is more, the image of the Russian mother was portrayed in a negative way—something absolutely impossible for the Soviet censors. Weak, poor, deprived of many social rights, and at the same time, wise, kind and joyful, the Jewish family stays together, helping each other out under any circumstances.[9] In their devotion to each other and their children, the Jewish couple represents the harmony of family life and the continuity of the Collective Body against all the odds of Russian history and civil war. In spite of the physical weakness of their bodies and fragility of their social position, the Jewish family (often robbed, beaten and killed by all sides in the war) even risks their lives to save complete strangers: a newly born Russian child and his mother—a Red Army commissar hiding from the White Army. The parents-warriors of the new-born, the soldiers of the Civil war—a sacred war for the Soviet regime—are shown in the most atypical way. They are signified not as the people's heroes, as usual, but rather as those who abandoned the natural ways of the Collective Body, by choosing war over family. These stereotypical symbolic figures of Soviet ideology were stripped by the film of their usual titles of the "sacred warriors for the freedom for all." In the most controversial way for the Soviet era, *Commissar* resignified the Civil War warriors as a man and a woman, a father and a mother, who failed to fulfill their parental duty—as those who lost sacred values, rather than those who fought for them. The two sets of sacred meanings—that of the Soviet regime and that of the Collective Body—the two opposing systems of values—were openly juxtaposed and tested in the film-ritual. The crucial test was the ritual of birth-giving, and the film revealed that in the present social system the birth of new life has been deprived of its sacral meaning. *Commissar* demonstrated that birth-giving has lost its sacrality for the symbolic Soviet mother, being perceived by her only as an inconvenience on the endless roads of war (Civil, Cold, ideological, economic).

Birth-giving, one of the most vital and significant rites of passage, is most closely linked to the symbolism of *Rodovoe Telo*—the Collective/Birth-giving Body. It represents the ultimate moment of the Collective Body's regeneration, creating the future and the links within Great Time. Violation of the ritual birth, de-signification of it as a Big Moment, ultimately robs people of their connection to Great Time and disconnects individual life from the immortal existence of the Collective Body. The distorted, dysfunctional Collective Body, a representation of twentieth-century Russia, is shown in the film through the tragic loss of ritual moments. Using ritual symbolism as a pivotal point, *Commissar* reveals that the "initiating"—the "sacred instructor"—has failed the initiation herself. Cared for by the Jewish couple, the bearers of true family values and focused on life's sacred moment (birth) by fate itself, the woman-warrior fails to understand her true predestination. Even hidden from the dangers of war and given a chance to receive a sacred message, she nevertheless turns away from it, back to the way of violence. Faced with the true perspective of the Collective Body, Klavdia does not recognize it and again chooses war over life, abandoning her child—the Collective Body's future—for good for the sake of death. Thus, the moment of revelation, recognition, gaining sacred knowledge never comes to the woman-commissar.

Interestingly, the mother abandoning her child in the film's narrative structure is also the one who slaughters potential fathers, those males who do not want to participate in the civil war. As a military person, the woman-commissar is destroying enemies (men), those on the opposite side of the war (White Army) and those who try to avoid taking sides at all. One of Klavdia's duties is executing deserters—those townsfolk who tries to escape serving in the Red Army. One of the scenes—an execution—is described by Lev Annensky, ex-Soviet critic:

> Askoldov is doubtless more interested in the texture of execution than in its reason. We don't know who the person is, thrown into the basement to be executed, why he tried to avoid the battle, whether he is really a deserter or someone who simply had gone to bring some food to his children. We see the face of the woman-commissar, who decided that he is going to die. And we see the

> texture of death in slow motion: the falling of the body, alienated from the sound, from words, from meanings. Before entering the man, the bullet goes through the jug of milk, and the milk slowly mixes with blood under the fallen body... The same "intermixture of elementa" is also in *Andrei Roublev.* [10]

The elementa here is life and death, in their corporeal dimensions. Interacting, blood and milk—symbols closely associated with the semiosphere of the Collective Body—generate the image of the endless life stream, interrupted by an unexpected and unjustifiable intrusion. White, red and black, the colors of milk, blood and bullet, strikingly coincide in this metaphorical episode with the "color triad" in Turner's semiotic anthropology.[11] Turner's tertiary signifying system of colors (based on his studies of African rituals) is surprisingly manifest in the film-ritual *Commissar.* Notably, Turner also stressed that the symbolism of white is connected to the theory of procreation, which is a direct reference to initiation mysteries. In Ndembu language, for example, "white" means "child" and "luck"; but in all cultures it represents both semen and milk and a whole set of interrelated symbols.[12] The three colors, especially represented in the triad and interaction, function in *Commissar* as effectual dynamic signifiers of the semiosphere of the Collective Body, and also point at the ritual quality of Askoldov's filmmaking style.

Undoubtedly, the controversial image of the woman-warrior in the film by Askoldov was intended as a counter-text to the symbolic image of woman-commissar from V. Vishnevsky's famous play *The Optimistic Tragedy.* Its beautiful female commissar became an archetypal image of the revolution and gave numerous metatextual/ritual off-springs of female fighters in many narratives of Socialist Realism. The femininity of the heroine—the symbol of the heroic revolution—referred to the Russian sacred ritual symbol of Mother-Land, which thus sanctioned ruthless battles and justified any sacrifice. From this perspective, the violence of war sanctioned by the mother had been always resignified by Soviet ideology as a caring action of giving life—to the new society, children of revolution. However, the film *Commissar* was intended to expose this demagogy and suddenly revealed that *there were no children*—nobody could be born on the roads of war—and that the Mother-Revolution is indeed a killing, not a nurturing mother. The mythological image of the Father devouring, leaving or (symbolically) killing his children is not a stranger to the Russian semiosphere—the father-lord or father-czar who betrays and destroys his people-children has been a legitimate image in Russian mythology in many different modalities. However, the Mother-monster devouring her progeny, a Russian Medea in political uniform—*Commissar,* Mother-Killer, childhater—was a symbolic image of such explosive power that the film's fate was predestined in the Soviet Union. The female fighter, a political symbol of cultural heroism in the Soviet system of meanings, was resignified by the director as the afflicting dead ancestor rather than a savior of the people and its sacred instructor. *Commissar* not only challenged the symbolic image of Soviet Motherland, essential for Soviet twentieth-century ideology, but it painfully touched upon the deepest levels of culture—the most significant matriarchal symbolism of the Russian people, the ever-saving and protecting Russian mother. In the situation when a minority of males completely dominated the majority, as well as their females, it has often been the case that only a mother could provide comfort and a spiritual space of escape from social humiliation and spiritual destruction to her sons and daughters. The Russian mother, and Mother-Russia, a pagan all-powerful feminine deity, was transformed into a Christian image of *Bogoroditsia* ("The Birth-Giving Mother of God," with the emphasis on birth-giving rather than the innocence of the Virgin in the Western tradition). Her image was the most popular object of religious affection in Russia. Motherhood, as a condensed dominant ritual symbol, has provided healing ritual procedures in Russian culture for centuries. It embraced and ran the very symbolic spectrum—the image-meanings of nature, space, escape, warmth, feeding, nurturing, support, comfort, pity, unconditional love and sharing—the complex integral semantic subsystem, associated with the survival modes in Russian conditions.

Challenging and distracting within the semantic sphere the sacred symbolism of matriarchy—hidden but still active, and associated with the ritual powers—was in Russian culture comparable to the physical destruction of one's own mother. However, Askoldov took this most painful way to prevent the regime's further exploitation of the powerful Collective Body's imagery and meanings, and to expose the degradation of the Collective Body within the reality of Soviet conditions. To translate this semantic explosion into the terms of Christian culture, one could say, for example, that one's own mother is being exposed in the film-ritual as a witch (exorcism). As evil revealed to the light of day, the mother-witch loses her black magic powers, those by which she has supported the regime by helping to keep her own progeny in slavery, "unborn," symbolically "dead." This drastic and radical deconstruction of the ritual meanings most sacred for both Russian and Soviet cultures and manipulated for so long by Soviet ideology, was the method of Askoldov's film-ritual. The "exorcism of the devil" from one's own mother requires first an acknowledgment in the ritual form (performance, film) that the most significant other, the collective identity, is deformed and that the Collective Body of the people needs ritual purification.

Touching upon one of the most important rites of passage in the whole ritual system of meanings—birth-giving, becoming the mother—*Commissar* showed that in Soviet conditions, motherhood became an ultimate "ritual failure." The film revealed the rejection and destruction of the very essence of ritual and denial of the sacrality of giving/receiving the gift of life—desacralization and deritualization of birth-giving. The mother denies the ritual meaning—the sacral rite of passage for her son coming into life; she also denies the sacrality of motherhood as a rite of passage for herself, with this she denies the future for the Collective Body. From being the most significant sacred figure in culture, the mother-Russia revealed her collaboration with the enemy, the political regime, that suppressed the children in the name of the mother—Soviet motherland. Not only has she forgotten the meaning of life, but she cannot wait to leave her child for the sake of the war, fighting for false values, nonexistent meanings. Thus, the reality of the Collective Body, the life of flesh and blood is abandoned for the sake of simulacra. A child born from such a mother has no other option but to become a deformed part of the Body-of-All. The generation of children born in the conditions of mass ritual failure and loss of sacred values would develop only in a distorted form of the Collective Body doomed to degrade.

*Commissar* was one of the first films that was designed to communicate with the audience on the deep level of ritual symbolism. One of the main reasons why *Commissar* was prohibited was the film's exploitation of the domain of dominant ritual symbols—the exclusive playground of Soviet power and official ideology. The film desacralized the Soviet myth of the motherland as a *Great Mother-warrior,* thus attempting to destroy ritual symbolism in its Soviet interpretation, described by Clark in *The Soviet Novel.* The symbolic mother-revolution was shown as the afflicting shade that projects her sins onto the country's historical future, thus affecting its spiritual and biological vitality. With its powerful ritual counter-strategy, the film-ritual could have had an explosive effect on the Soviet people and influenced the configuration of sacred meanings in the society. *Commissar* was one of the first attempts to bring attention to the issue defined by Bakhtin as *rodovoe telo* and to engender an open discussion of the deformation of the Collective Body of the Russian people in the course of its totalitarian history.

The mother figure in many cultures is an essential referential symbol for the Collective Body. It has important meaning in all the cultures, particularly in Russia.[13] It corresponds with the mother's role as "the archetype of protector, nourisher, and teacher." According to Turner, in many rituals, the chief of the tribe/community is referred to as "the mother of his people."[14] In terms of the semiotics of ritual, its important to emphasize, as Turner pointed out, that most of the ritual training and most of the ritual symbolism is "concerned with making the girl a sexually accomplished spouse, a fruitful woman, and a mother able to produce a generous supply of milk." Turner further stresses that "for each girl it is a unique process. She is initiated alone and is the centre of public attention and care... The girl's puberty ritual was part of her marriage ritual, and marriage marked her transition from girlhood to womanhood."[15] All the rituals are stages of one macroritual process, the chains in the developmental dynamics of the Collective Body spread in Great Time. Therefore, a single story based on one particular ritual is a stage in the metanarrative within the macrocultural context—metaritual process controlled by and essential for the Collective Body—the collective immortality of the people.

The conceptualization of the role of the mother has a significant place in the universal system of binary opposition: male/female, death/birth, forest/garden, hunter/gatherer, etc. "Childbirth and killing, life-giving and life-taking, constitute opposed and complementary terms which provide a framework for symbolic conceptualizations of men's and women's roles quite generally, and perhaps, universally."[16] Exploring further a single cultural symbol in the context of the whole semantic system, Rosaldo and Atkinson write: "Man the Hunter is a form of man the killer, the life-taker, opposed implicitly or explicitly to Woman the Childbearer, the *giver* of life through birth." The transfiguration of one meaning, for instance, "male=death", "female=birth" into the opposite: "female=death"—as we see in *Commissar*—leads to the destruction of the whole system. In world culture, "the assumption of life-taking roles by women—is generally regarded as unnatural and undesirable. Female killers are portrayed as sterile, virginal, and so, incomplete as women, or as violent, childhaters, mockers of group integrity, and images of inauspicious times."[17] In the system of meanings the world over, the female-killer is associated with the destruction of the Collective Body.

In the context of postcolonial cultural theory, *Commissar* also raises a question whether there is one Collective Body, or many Collective Bodies of national cultures. This is a legitimate and essential question, especially for post-Soviet history where the multiple identities of the Collective Body were denied. Not only were two different conceptions of the Collective Body presented in the film, but also two different national "collective bodies." The controversy with Jewish people in the film is associated with the historical situation, in which the Jews (as well as other separate nationalities in the Soviet Union, however, Jews more so than others) were supposed to give up their separate national identity for the sake of the "mechanical unity" of a unified Soviet identity.[18] From the standpoint of Soviet ideology, only one unified people could be shown in the film. However, the Jews were openly shown as "cultural others," strangers, who, nevertheless saved the symbolic "our" child. The resultant controversy not only dealt with the "Jewish question" in an untraditional way, but raised a larger issue—did one or many Collective Bodies co-exist in the cultural space of the Soviet Union? Any people who were searching for the separate national identity of their Collective Body were defined as "nationalists" and subject to persecution. The "theoretical" general discussion, which the film inevitably resulted in, had a political and ideological meaning and contributed to the prohibition of *Commissar*. The paradox remains in the intersecting presence of multiple Collective Bodies of peoples and cultures and the co-presence of one unified Collective Body of humankind that Bakhtin referred to: just as there are the autonomy of the individual and the integrity of the Collective Body, in a similar manner there are both many and one in co-existence in the Collective Body of culture. Beyond the frames of Soviet political history, on a more general scale, this controversial question has to be addressed by cultural practices rather than by cultural theorists. The process of self-identification of national Collective Bodies cannot occur without clarification of their boundaries in time and space, as well as by their immanent structure defined by a unique cultural memory. On the other hand, when they are "ready," i.e. mature enough for the next rite of passage—(re)integration with the larger community—not earlier and only on acceptable terms—the multiple bodies of national cultures would associate with the Collective Body of Genus, as an organic (in Durkheim's terms, vs. mechanic as that of the Soviet Union), conscious and willing unity. This dual process, separation/integration, will long retain conflict and remain controversial and dialectical for world culture.

## Fertility Ritual: *Little Vera*

The loss of "fertility rituals" and their meaning (signification of birth-giving through the ritual system) is reflected in another *perestroika* hit, *Little Vera* (*Malen'kaia Vera,* 1988) by Valery Pichul, via the modern themes of false motherhood, desacralization of birth-giving and degradation of the family (the symbol of the Collective Body). The rite of passage into marriage and motherhood—a typical theme of (film) art—is transmuted in Soviet culture into the theme of decaying fertility, with the ongoing motif of fictive conception.[19] The name Vera means "faith" in Russian: the double meaning of the title has been widely acknowledged by critics. The film is a story of one girl, and yet it is a social saga about an entire people who have lost faith and attempt to live without the sacred. Well-known also as the first erotic Soviet movie, *Little Vera* was a passionate discussion of and a powerful satire on the moral values of the Soviet people. The eroticism of the movie was a controversial device intended to expose the challenge of their very biological existence.[20] Strikingly combining grotesque with critical realism, the film depicts a small town family, dysfunctional in a typical Soviet way: the *father is withdrawn*—almost always drunk; the *mother is wasted*—the double burden of work at home and the factory has left her without life energy and warmth for her family members. With the empty eyes of social zombies, Vera's parents keep moving as if performing an endless "ritual of living"—a weird ceremony of arduous every-day existence, the meaning of which was lost long ago. The strongest impulse that both children—a son and a daughter—get from this life is to escape, to distance themselves as soon as possible from the senseless para-existence of their parents. For the elder son, the route of escape was to marry a Moscow girl and settle in the big city, while for the younger daughter, teenager Vera, it is her sexuality. Portraying for the first time in the history of Soviet cinema an openly and strikingly sexually appealing and sensual heroine, bringing on screen her irresistible biological charm, the authors aimed at two targets—the market and censorship of the official culture. The young filmmakers, Maria Khmelik, a scriptwriter, and her husband, Valery Pichul, the director, innovatively used the element of sexuality, previously prohibited on Soviet screens. It was their intention to make a financial success of their first film and to generate a media scandal, bringing attention to unresolved questions—the hypocrisy of the official morality and the despair of every day family life of the "simple Soviet people."

Putting aside for a while the film's strong satirical and philosophical aspects, as well as that of social protest, let us focus on the issue of sexuality. Whatever strategic considerations the filmmakers may have had in employing the sexual theme, it has received in the film (as always in any film culture) a strong message on the problematic of the Collective Body. It was not so much that sexual intercourse was shown for the first time on the Soviet screen, as the powerful element of desire that made *Little Vera* an essential cultural text. With all its strong and mixed messages, *Little Vera* became a metacultural form of and even a call for the *fertility rituals* to be restored within the cultural realm. Vera's liberated, or more exactly, unstoppable sexuality, was unacceptable to most of the public, particularly to the "generation of parents," who castigated the film for "being vulgar, obscene, and a bad example for the youth."[21] However, the same qualities of the film revealed a channel of communication with the troubled Collective Body.

Although the Collective Body should be defined in terms of the responsibility and re-connection of individuals on the basis of any effective union, the Collective Body of Genus realizes and actualizes its goals first through human sexuality. The sexual sphere was suppressed in the Soviet reality and system of meanings and repressed into the collective unconscious by the hypocrisy of the official ideology and by the ultimate goal of the regime to produce obedient robots rather than autonomous entities living in harmony with their biology. Orwell's *1984* has shown it in a literary form (a dystopia that has become a reality of the totalitarian state). Letting it out of the closet was culture's way of reminding us of that the Collective Body's needs are a major cultural problem. It represented an urgent topic essential for society's survival and spoke to the alarming condition of the Collective Body (realities and regulations of sexuality, birth-giving and parenting) in Soviet and post-Soviet reality.[22] Although the element of sexuality as such was shown in *Little Vera* as a liberated biological power, the forms and ways of its regulation and embodiment, according to the Collective Body's needs and ends, are seen to be completely lost. The disintegration of the social unit, hypocritically presented by the official ideology as a "strong Soviet family," has already been explored in literature and cinema. The most essential contribution to the exposure of the ideologized family theme was made by the so-called "cruel female literature" of the 1980-90s.[23] The main concern and the mytheme in the writings of the Soviet "angry young women" was what may be defined as a threat of permanent damage to the nation's Collective Body.

However, *Little Vera* did more than follow the controversial path of the "angry" women-dramatists by showing the disintegration of family relationships and destruction of gender roles in Soviet society. The film presented a new type of conflict, depicting the impotence of the Soviet family (as socio-psychological institution) and liberated sexuality, a still active biological power of the Collective Body. *Little Vera* showed that the Collective Body is still alive against all odds—despite the damage done by the commissars, dictators, Zones, etc.—but the structures (structured processes) of the Collective Body's development have been destroyed in irreparable ways. The film's stylistic innovation lay in the controversial combination of cinematic eroticism with the antitotalitarian pathos and critique of Soviet society. Not only did *Little Vera* facilitate the liberation of the suppressed sphere of sexuality, and play upon it, but it brought a bitter irony to the very issue of cinematic desire. The film exposed the meaninglessness of sexuality as just one more escapism, one more dead-end in the search for ultimate freedom, without a deep understanding of life-and-family issues, the Collective Body's agenda. It was an especially tragic revelation of the movie, which played with the issue of sexuality in such an uncommonly liberated way, that the Soviet people are still "very much alive," still very much in need of channeling their biological energy at the same time the psychological, social, ritual and cultural regulations of the Collective Body's domain have been completely destroyed. The high sexual *potency* of the Collective Body revealed by *Little Vera* (the potency which according to Bakhtin and Turner is a vital stream, channel of biological trans-generational living power and the source of future life) was contrasted to the inefficient sphere of micro-social organization—the *impotency* of the Collective Body's unit, the family. The film's highly marketable eroticism paradoxically hid its true revelation—the "castration" of the Collective Body—its sterilization and emasculation by Soviet history was the metamessage of the movie.

The interaction of the ritual themes "killing of the father" and "castration of the son" was the structural focus of the film's narrative. Soon after moving in with Vera and her parents, Vera's husband-to-be, Sergei, beats her father up, while the father in return stabs him with a knife. The conflict resulted in the ultimate crisis within the Collective Body, the symbolic death of both men. The young male ends up in the hospital fighting for his life, and the old male is under interrogation, struggling to avoid prison. The symbolic overthrow of the father-figure, the death of the "king" by the hand of a stranger, as well as the stabbing—a symbolic castration—of the dangerous young rival have obvious mythological and ritual connotations.

It is Vera's position—that of a young female, a symbol of fertility and the Collective Body—with respect to their conflict (old/young, past/future, father/husband, order/disorder, obedience/revolt, power/dissidence, king/stranger, etc.) that will determine the future. A crucial witness to the crime, she agonizes over the decision of who is guilty and what to tell the police. It is Vera (faith), the young active segment of the Collective Body, who needs to decide who is to "die" (the father or the future husband), which necessary biological connection, a natural part of the Collective Body, to sacrifice for the sake of its future. Vera's mother puts pressure on her to choose the father over the husband-to-be, but for Vera this means negating her biological future and that of her children. The symbolic conflict in the film is irresolvable in the context of the Collective Body—neither the roots nor the fruits can be neglected within the immortal body of all. Neither option will ever heal the rotten Collective Body: agonizing over the decision, Vera lies to the police, thus betraying her husband for the sake of her father. However, returning home, she attempts suicide because she sees no way out and no future for her as a biological being, a family person, in either outcome of the case.

Immediately after Sergei proposes to Vera (at the beginning of the film), she is shown in the most tragic state of mind imaginable for a young bride-to-be. Although Vera wants Sergei more than anything in the world, she is extremely worried about the degree of mutual hatred between her parents and the groom. This hostility creates the film's subtle suspense, something overshadowing—as Vera and the audience feel—the tragic future of her family life. From the very first encounter, Sergei and the father start a never ending duel of insults and offense. The intolerance between the generations emphasizes the unbridgeable gap between the segments of the Collective Body—deconstruction of the Collective Body's temporary spiral, its very Great Time, conditioning the continuity and immortality of the Collective Body. The origin of and reasons for this hate-gap, a painful revelation that is courageously shown by the film, deserve special attention.

The generation of obedient Soviet fathers—*little men,* survivors at the bottom of the totalitarian pyramid—is signified in the movie as *slaves,* those imprisoned for life in the cells of inhuman existence. The slaves are symbolically dead, biologically "invisible," they are not living beings; they are the robots, zombies, crews, social functions. They are not supposed to have their alive Collective Body, which only an independent species can; they are the property of the government—deprived of freedom, creation and procreation. *Little Vera*'s generation of sons and daughters is afraid more than anything in the world of following in their fathers' steps, of becoming socially and biologically *invisible.* This fear generates to a great extent the unstoppable promiscuity of the youth in *Little Vera.*[24] Unaware of the bigger picture, where the fathers can be seen not only as the cause of their tragedy, but also as victims of their history, the sons passionately hate the fathers as the very representation of slavery. The fathers' anger against the sons is an anger against the controversial forms of protest on the part of the young, as well as against the very energy of protest—something that the fathers have lost for ever. The intolerance also results from envy by the dying of the living. It is the jealousy of a lost generation, a life destroyed of the life which still has a chance. The disgust and fear of slavery—a premature, profane and shameful death—is revealed in the film as the true source of the sons' intolerance towards the fathers. The younger generation's survival instinct pushes them into destroying the fathers' submissive "rituals" of self-annihilation—those intended to re-establish the modes of slavery. It is the Soviet fathers' ceremonies of self-mortification so vividly shown by the film that represent the tragic dimension of *Little Vera.*

It is the old man's self-destruction, his alcoholism (a typical form of "suicide" in Russia—a withdrawal, a self-imposed symbolic death among males) that triggers Sergei's hatred of Vera's father. Sergei, Vera's fiancee, cannot tolerate her father's constant self-humiliation and humiliation of others, which exposes a slave's state of mind. The only true emotion that connects Vera's generation with the Collective Body, its past and its future, is the painful shame, experienced by the young for themselves, their fathers and the kind of progeny that can be born from such family ties. The film emphasizes that promiscuity does not lead to creation. After all, however passionate and sexually active, Vera still is *not fertile.* One cannot create and procreate out of shame; shame and humiliation are impotent and they lead the Collective Body into a dead-end. Both Vera and her mother reveal what can be called 'false motherhood'—one of the ongoing themes in late Soviet culture.[25] Several times in the film story, the issues of birth-giving and parenting are shown not only as completely desacralized, but as taken advantage of and manipulated for the sake of other considerations that have nothing to do with the interests of the Collective Body. There are four couples in the film, shown as those who have forgotten what male-female relationship and family ties have to be: Vera and Sergei, her brother's family, the parents and Vera's best friend with her strange boyfriend.[26] Vera's parents are performed by the well-known Soviet actors, Luedmila Zaitseva and Yuri Nazarov, in the style of "cruel realism." Their acting style also follows the great Russian theatrical tradition of psychological grotesque.[27] The latter was invented to combine the achievements of Russian psychological and modernist theaters. This performing style was designed to show the impossible—the phantasmagoria of the emotional life of human robots, social marionettes, and was called the "theatre of social mask" by the critic B. Alpers.[28] Both the topic and the method, although constantly prohibited by the censors, proved to be always urgent for Soviet culture. Both the father and the mother, although always hustling and bustling, have a fixed inhuman stare, looking not at people but somehow through them. Both parents' responses are shown in *Little Vera* as always delayed and inadequate; they move, talk and act like the symbolically dead, as if they were mechanical dolls, automatons, unable not only to understand a situation, but even to focus on it. And yet, they are strikingly realistic and authentic in the details of a typical Soviet existence. The parents are played by both actors with disgust and pity: it is as if the mother and father are constantly trying to revive themselves as human beings, to react emotionally, but the state of the symbolic, psychological death appears to have become their permanent condition. They look at the world from their body-shells, trying to reach out to the children, but every episode in the film, every moment proves them unable to do so. The parents, especially the father, are still capable of feeling pain. Nevertheless, their efforts to revive, to transform back from marionettes into live beings again, to become active parts of the Collective Body, are shown to be inefficient and both comic and tragic. The hopelessness of the fathers' mutation into an artificial life form, incapable of providing a future for their children, is what affects most the young generation of *Little Vera*. It results in the ineffective and infertile deviations of the Collective Body life generating process, manifested in Vera's promiscuity (a form of protest), and her brother's false fatherhood or pseudo-family (a form of submission). Unlike *Commissar,* which points at one afflicting shadow, everybody in *Little Vera* is the afflicted and the afflicting (again), constantly restoring thegenerational chain of *dead souls* archetypal for Russian culture.[29]

Vera's elder brother is shown as a conformist, a follower of the convenient route of a social zombie. We do not learn much about his life, but even the sketchy details are striking. He cheats on his wife with complete strangers in the college dormitory as soon as he is out of her sight. To his parents' shock, Vera's brother never brings his Moscow wife and son home with him. The explanation may be one of the following or both: he is ashamed of his wife or/and of his own parents. He lives in the gap between the generations and social levels, trying to adjust and survive, instead of bridging or even acknowledging this gap. The very situation of his marriage is most typical for Soviet years: a provincial young man desperately tries to stay in Moscow (one of the few "closed cities" with a much higher living standard than others; a place on the other side of the social gap from his small home town). In a manner similar to a man marrying money in a capitalist society, Vera's brother marries *propiska* (permission to live in the capital city—Soviet variation of the "green card") and *zhilplozhad'* ("living space"—a room in a Moscow apartment). Ironically, in this type of "arranged marriage" one side is often unaware (as Sonia, Vera's sister-in-law might be) of the true intentions of the partner. But despite the fake marriage, a Soviet couple of this type often lived a long and "normal" family life. However, the child conceived as a "condition," a form of social contract will inevitably be afflicted by the conspiracy of a false marital union. All this explains why Sonia is never shown: she is not even a trophy-wife, but a condition for her husband's social survival and move up the ladder. Whether Sonia is attractive or ugly, nice or snobbish, she is irrelevant to her husband's self-identity: not a woman, a wife, a mother of his son. Whatever Sonia represents for her husband, she is the *invisible* in terms of the kinship, as her child destined to be. Sonia and her progeny are a *nonexistent* part of the

Collective Body, manifesting another mode of destruction in *Little Vera*'s saga of Soviet family life.

In *Commissar,* a child was simply abandoned. But for the next generation in *Little Vera* the child becomes an object of manipulation, a playing card in social games, a way to benefit in the spheres of status or property. The issue of false pregnancy/false motherhood reveals a loss of ritual meaning of a new life. The destroyed ritual of birth-giving turns into a ceremony of social opportunism. Designified and desacralized, child-bearing and birth-giving had become in Soviet society resignified as a means in the social struggle for various kinds of material interests. Pregnancy and birth-giving are tried as new "rites of passage," not into the new phases within the Collective Body's development, but into the various structures of social hierarchy. Vera pretends to be pregnant to gain her parents' permission to marry. Her brother most probably married and made a child as a condition to live in Moscow. In the movie's climactic moment, Vera's mother admits that Vera had not been a wanted child in the first place: she was conceived only for the purpose of getting a bigger apartment.[30] None of the film's characters needs and ever conceives children for the sake of parenthood and future life. The Collective Body's ultimate goals are abandoned and forgotten. Rephrasing the title of Paradjanov's famous movie *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors,* the society represented in *Little Vera* is filled with the *shadows of forgotten progeny.* It is most characteristic that Vera's generation are the grandchildren of the *Commissar.* The generation of Vera's parents, the children of the ever-fighting Mother-Russia, were abandoned themselves in their own childhood. The rites of passage which are intended to move generations along the Collective Body's life cycle are lost. Great Time, rephrasing Hamlet, is "out of joint." The joints within and between the segments of personal biological time are broken and can never be reintegrated into the efficient and vital Collective Body. The continuity of the Collective Body's disintegration throughout Soviet socio-biological history is emphasized in the number of movies released prior to and during *perestroika.* There were good mothers and (more rarely) good fathers in Soviet society, but representing parenthood and family life, Soviet film culture persistently pointed at alarming tendencies, invisible in the perspective of several generations, however vividly dangerous in the scale of Great Time.

Vera, the story's protagonist, does not need to leave home to get to the Forest (alien environment, liminal space of symbolic death, in terms of the ritual-narrative paradigm)—she was born there. She was conceived and has lived her entire life in the alien space of temporary death, which seems to never end. And the monsters—dissociative agents of sense and meaning—are her own and only parents. There is no message, no message at all, as there are no sacred instructors in the symbolic space of the film. Vera and her fiancee would want very much to awake from never-ending temporary death, but even provoking strong physical sensations (sex and death), however ecstatic, cannot help them to end the perpetual trance, to leave the spellbound space and return to human reality. What seems to be a narrative movement in a seemingly traditional film is a circular *dance macabre* within the labyrinth of a family home. *Little Vera* shows how postmodern structures enter the realm of traditional story-telling and, based on the issues of Soviet life, transform narrative paradigms into a specific Soviet postmodernism.

The film ends with Sergei's unexpected return to Vera's apartment, for good it seems. But her husband-to-be returns with the wound not only in his body but also in his soul. There is a question imprinted in his devastated uncomprehending eyes—what would this family life be and would he ever be able to forgive Vera, and her parents. However, the kinship is "re-connected" and a new cycle of family life begins... Nobody even notices how Vera's father dies. He, who often pretends to have a heart attack to gain "respect" and attention from the family, is in agony now, wheezing on the kitchen floor of the tiny apartment. But nobody pays attention, and nobody "pays respect"; everyone thinks it is his usual prank. The death of the father in *Little Vera* is not only desacralized—it is unnoticed and unnoticeable. It bears no tragedy, it ends no life and it has no meaning. *Little Vera*'s finale, its silent and horrifying *non-finito,* raises an important question for the semiotic anthropology of cinema—how the interpretation of death defines the means and ends of a given (film) culture. The issue of death, emphasized in *Little Vera,* is further developed in *Repentance.* The meaning of a single person's life and death, as well as the profound sacred connection between death and culture's whole sphere of meanings, will be further explored using the materials from various films.

## Death Ritual: *Repentance*

*Repentance* (*Pokaianie,* 1986) became a sensation, and its release marked the beginning of the *glasnost* era.[31] The film was made by the outstanding Georgian filmmaker Tengiz Abuladze, and was released after four years of prohibition. In spite of the film's fame—it has had screenings all over the world—the ritual aspects of *Repentance* were underestimated and misunderstood, although they represent the most imaginative and striking dimensions of the film (as is often the case with ritual motifs in modern cinema). I argue that it is because of the film's ritual motifs and ritual semantics that its political messages gained such enormous powers of defamiliarization, artistic persuasion and ideological impact. The film's syntagmatic and paradigmatic structures are largely based on Georgian traditional rites. Ritual symbolism survived to a greater extent in the culture of mountainous Georgia (more independent and distant from political centers) than in other parts of the former Soviet Union. Previous famous films by Abuladze, *Prayer* (*Mol'ba,* 1969) and *Wishing Tree* (*Drevo zhelaniia*, 1977), were also filled with ritual symbolism—it was precisely what gave them their unique flavor, philosophical quality, striking imagery and the mysteriousness of metaphorical language, atypical for the Soviet mainstream movie screen. The ritual semantics, employed by the Georgian filmmaker, however, has had a lot in common with that of other cultures, but had to a great extent lost its meaning for the Soviet, as well as Western audience of the movie.

The film presents a complex story line focused on the female protagonist, who repeatedly and persistently interrupts the performance of a ritual. The particular ritual, which becomes a point of argument in *Repentance,* is a burial—a death ritual. From the standpoint of the semiotics of ritual, the funeral, burial is a rite of passage intended to transfer a dead individual into the sacred state of *the dead.* When the ritual is performed correctly and effectively, the dead is supposed to gain a new status—that of the ancestor spirit. He becomes a powerful ancestor, not only a guardian of kinship, but a messenger, a donor/giver of meaning for the next generation and the generations to come. Thus, passing through the sacred ritual space, one gains more than just a new status—one gets power. It is a magic power over contemporaries, as well as over future generations—over the whole Collective Body, its mode of development and ultimate goals. To pass through the magic field of ritual means to rule in the sphere of meanings—to determine the whole semiosphere of the progeny—the system of meanings of the future society. The film reveals and emphasizes that ritual in modern age is connected to power—ideological, social, eventually political—as well as to the whole system of social meanings. The film's suspense has clear political overtones: it contains the fears of the audience and those of the *dramatis personae*—what if the dictator's heir, as well as the people, never admit his crimes, and thus the corpse remains in the ground of culture forever? The danger of the political—totalitarian—affliction of the Collective Body becomes the film's substance of suspense.

With this system of ritual meanings in mind, we may understand why the female protagonist—a symbolic child of the murdered intelligentsia—cannot let the body of Varlam be buried according to the ritual rules. Varlam, a former dictator, character bearing a close resemblance to both Stalin and Hitler, is a symbol of dictatorship, of a totalitarian reasoning of history and social purpose.[32] If the body of the monster is buried with honor and left resting in peace, it will sooner or later return with a newly gained, multiplied power, and will inevitably restore its influence over the people. The future of the whole community—the Collective Body's potential well-being—depends solely on the protagonist's resistance against the use of ritual powers for the sake of evil. The heroine digs him up, and the dictator's family buries him again. Every time Varlam's body is buried, according to the tradition—the heroine digs him up and throws away from the grave, again and again. The naive (or hypocritical?) family members—Stalin's symbolic political heirs of the Stagnation era—seem to be unaware of the evil character of the dead man. They think they are performing the ritual for the sake of peace and tradition (or truly, as the film suggests, for the sake of silence). However, the heroine cannot let him unite with the soil and gain the magic of earth and death. The dead dictator cannot be allowed to get access to the beyond, to the supernatural powers. In terms of Bakhtin, his death cannot be signified as a fertile death; and in terms of Turner, he cannot be allowed to benefit from the fruitful darkness of the liminal space. Therefore, the heroine's actions, motivated by her aspiration to save the community's future, themselves acquire—being repeated again and again—a sacred ritual meaning. A new ritual, or more exactly, the restoration of the true ritual law, is structured inside a cinematic form and inscribed into the film's story line. The new restored ritual of purification of the common ground—national historical consciousness—is being created by the new cultural hero and by the filmmaker-shamans, the artists—guardian spirits of culture. The film-ritual appears to be intended to prevent a false "profane authority" (a political leader) from becoming a "sacred authority" (a historical symbol, an ideological signifier). As is typical for ritual consciousness, non-performance of ritual may and in this case will lead to the disaster. Thus, for the heroine, the movie's ritual protagonist, her drastic actions were the only possible way of (re)creating the counter-ritual (or a ritual counter-strategy, rephrasing Wollen's semantic counter-strategy of cinema). The meaning of her counter-ritual, her redressive action of the Soviet social drama, is the bridging of the breach over the unbridgeable gap of Soviet political history. The symbolic prevention of future trouble and salvation of the Collective Body raises the protagonist of *Repentance* to the status of a new cultural hero, one who saved the community and positively affected the common future.

The example of *Repentance,* a newly created film-ritual of modern history, shows the very mechanism of emanation of a mythological hero from a narrative structure; it also reveals how a film story achieves the effectiveness of the ritual. The invisible deity, or the initiating (shaman), in the case of *Repentance* is the figure of the author-filmmaker, Tengiz Abuladze. It shows the mechanism of ritual-making, characteristic for the given historical condition. *Repentance* anticipated and modeled new rituals of the *glasnost* epoch—the exhumation again and again of the rotting poisonous corpse of the past from the body of the present. Borrowing from the deepest levels of the collective cultural memory and its unexhausted symbolism, the filmmakers contributed to the powerful ritual counter-strategies of the post-totalitarian culture.[33]

Although the film's political metaphors became highly popular in the years of *perestroika,* the ritual meanings of *Repentance* had no chance to be completely understood in the Soviet Union, as the symbolism of death had become taboo in the Soviet system of meanings. The eternally dying regime—a giant political corpse which pretended to be alive—could not tolerate any presence of meaning associated with death and, especially, its signification in the semiosphere of ideology. Symbols of death were shamelessly hidden or blocked whenever they needed to be mentioned; the whole sphere of death was subjected to censorship and excluded from the conscious level of culture.[34] It was only a heroic death on the fields of war that was allowed to be mentioned, although still never visualized, graphically shown in Soviet culture.[35] Bringing death to millions of people, the regime, with its ever "immortal fathers," was itself paralyzed by the fear of death. *Repentance* exploited this fear, exploring the sphere of cultural taboos and using it for the signification of unresolved cultural issues. The film investigated the rituals of death in an innovative, "de-ideologizing" and "physiologizing" way—deconstructing ideology and re-constructing the image of the human body. *Repentance* generated a shock, a profound emotional confusion, a pre-cathartic ritual state of society, which facilitated the attention to and the resolution of the deepest concerns of the Collective Body. Showing the dead body being juggled back and forth on the screen, the film de-sacralized a political taboo, as well as the very carriers of political power. The film made unmistakably clear that the regime was dead—the corpse was intentionally shown in the film in a graphic and vivid manner (something previously impossible for the Soviet screen), as well as with sarcasm and bold clownish humor. It was a release, a discharge of fears, as the death of a torturer can be—an indication of the slaves' forthcoming freedom.

*Repentance* was highly welcomed and praised as an act of political dissidence, as an ideological explosion; however, it was never discussed by the critics and audience on the level of ritual symbolism, particularly the symbolism of death. Involving a shockingly radical system of images, the symbolism of ritual death remained in the film somewhat incomprehensible for the mass audience. Thrilling and mysterious, deeply touching upon the viewers' imagination, it added to the film's cultural influence. It is important to emphasize that although incomprehensible on the rational level, it is the film's ritual structure and ritual symbolism that have largely determined its artistic power and impact on the society. *Repentance,* as a product of cinema—"the most popular of the arts"—truly became a film-ritual. And in this capacity, it has determined post-Soviet culture by including millions into the Collective Body through the communal ritual action. The film powerfully drew the audience into its ritual circle, wherein the new meanings of post-totalitarian reality were to be generated. With its explicitly ritual title, ritual content and ritual structure, the film became a collective post-Soviet rite of passage. Its first public screenings in 1986 were truly explosive, providing a mass catharsis and bridging the past and the future by the systems of meanings for the new era. Facilitating a transition from one epoch to another, *Repentance* represents an example of extremely successful and influential film-ritual, which managed to unite and affect the whole society.

In the context of the Collective Body theme developing in Soviet culture through the sequence of (film)narratives, *Repentance* emphasizes the resistance of healthy parts against the integration of sick and dangerous parts into the sacred unity of the Collective Body. The film stresses the distance between the political authority and the community (the Collective Body), the alternative goals and meanings of the two, as accentuated by Turner. What is good for the political power (and its representatives) may or may not—and often is not—be good for the Collective Body: the two often have different and conflicting goals. The system of rituals, as Turner emphasized, is essentially a function of the Collective Body, not those in power—whose actions are manifested in the system of ceremonies. A true (film)-ritual would guard the interests of the community, of the Collective Body from the intrusion of the ideology, of the political power.

The dead dictator—the film's antagonist, the symbolic Father of the State (or, a Big Brother)—represents an evil shadow, or a vicious dangerous ancestor whose aim is to grow back into the Collective Body to maintain control over its values and future. The film reveals the resistance against the acceptance of the evil "father" spirit as a Messenger for the new generations, and the resistance of the Collective Body against its inevitable degeneration, if afflicted by the dead Varlam. If buried properly, i.e. accepted as a dead ancestor, the former dictator becomes sacralized, potentially affecting the progeny with his ideological power. Therefore, by giving or not giving "permission" to perform a ritual, the Collective Body, through its ritual protagonist (a daughter of the murdered intellectuals), regulates its own integrity and future. In order to prevent the dictator, a symbol of the afflicted past, from growing back, the transitional magic of funeral (a magic of ritual transition) should be taken from his post-life existence. The ritual transition facilitates one's transformation into a supernatural being, a sacred being, a deity—*creator of the semantic field.* If the film's antagonist passes through the sacred boundaries of ritual, maintained and guarded by the film-ritual, he receives access to the "domain of the death" and becomes a powerful "shade." And then, the whole society (Collective Body) may be "caught by the shade," in Turner's terms—afflicted by the evil ancestor spirit, with his totalitarian "ideological agenda." The film's ritual strategies were to show ways to prevent the sacralization of Stalinism into the pantheon of Soviet history.

The dead ancestors are supposed to help the Collective Body's Future, to direct, assist its ways of self-realization, to instruct the Present with respect to the Collective Body's sacred values. The Past entirely controlling the Future may affect and reverse the whole Chronotope of the Collective Body: constantly re-establishing the modes of the Past in the Future, it may replace the Future with the Past, thus destroying the Collective Body's life opportunities. The evil accepted into the Collective Body, as its legitimate and guiding part, its sacralized past, may be destructive not only for the Collective Body, but for everything around it, as history has proved. Controlled by the Evil Father/Big Brother shadow, the whole Collective Body turns into an aggressive totalitarian unity—the twentieth century has displayed painful examples of manipulation with the Collective Body. The transformation of the dead dictator into an integral part of the Collective Body, his growing into the *body of all* as metastases of immorality, is something that should be prevented at all costs, as the film stressed. The corpse poison, remaining inside the Collective Body, required a new system of cultural strategies. The film's ritual organization, and its ritual symbolism, was intended to heal and reintegrate the Collective Body at the new turn of Great Time. As a rite of passage regulates the phases of individual lives, the film-ritual, in the long run, manifests a cultural function of the Collective Body, regulating its development during transitional moments of history.

*Repentance* combines the metaphorical quality of poetic logic with the directness of the ritual action. The film's antinarrative composition (similar to that of film-collages *The Viola Sonata* and *Scorpion's Gardens*) represents a cathartic dance of a ritual *man with the camera*—the shaman, exorcising the afflicting shade from the living Collective Body. The montage, seemingly chaotic, with its broken story line and striking combination of incompatibilities, manifests the state of cultural disintegration and the forceful ritual effort to recomposite the segments of reality. There is an evident inner physical movement in the montage, the powerful dynamics of the world's ritual re-creation, the generation of the (new) order from chaos. There is also an intense spiritual movement—an effort towards comprehending ourselves and the past. The cinematic montage signifies the liminal death, the *prima materia* ritual stage, facilitating and constituting the transformative process in culture.

*Repentance,* a film which had been made within Georgian culture, but became a sensation and revelation for the whole multinational Soviet Union, was not the first case when the truth was brought into the center from the "margins" (limen, threshold of cultural space/time), by one separate people to all others—the Collective Body.[36] This phenomenon demonstrates the matrix identity of a separate national culture (a part autonomously representing the whole) within would culture, and its ability to bring to the others the archetypal issues of all humankind.

Besides the urgent issues of postcolonial cultural theory, there are a number of issues which should be addressed from a feminist perspective. The female protagonist of *Repentance* does not have children of her own, however, she performs an extremely important ritual function for the whole Collective Body and its progeny. She is a wounded branch of the murdered and imprisoned generation, and as a result is unfulfilled as a mother herself. The generation that grew up dangerously close to the zones of death—mass purges—is doomed and becomes fruitless (for more on this see the analysis of *Freeze-Die-Revive!* further in the text). The symbolism of the cut branches (or lost seeds) of the Collective Body is manifest in *Repentance* through the striking metaphorical imagery—the heads on the ground as some impossible plants, those of a man and a woman, who are trying to escape the purges, hiding in the motherly womb of earth. Or another famous shot—a wife checking the logs sent by river from the camp, in order to find a message from her imprisoned husband. In both cases, the nature symbols—the people as cut trees or as cut fruits of the earth left on the ground—serve metaphorically to refer to the destroyed organism, the Collective Body.

Although the intelligentsia are cut from the parents physically, the female protagonist still carries their spiritual heritage. In the context of the Collective Body, the heroine of *Repentance*—the daughter of the man and the woman who hid themselves in the soil trying to escape into in the mother-earth—still achieves the status of cultural hero(ine) and a sacred instructor. She is the only one who knows what to do to prevent the affliction of the Collective Body and who understands the sacred meanings of ritual, while others blindly follow the rules of everyday politics. She is the one who dares to resist, to act, when nobody else does, for the sake of the Collective Body. She does not give birth, but she "knows" and she "acts," manifesting in this her ultimate contribution to the Collective Body's future.

One can easily notice that in Soviet antitotalitarian movies of the Stagnation era the controversial protagonist is often a female. This reflected to a great extent the situation in social life and in culture. In terms of social taboos, Soviet males, their behavior and thoughts (even hidden) were more carefully monitored by the authorities than those of females. Men were more suppressed in their social actions, as they were seen as more potentially dangerous for the regime. Resistance, as reflected by culture, gradually became a prerogative of female heroines, such as in the films *There is No Crossing under Fire, May I Have a Floor? Garage,* etc. On the other hand, in cinema a controversial male protagonist could not even pass censorship at the script stage; Soviet cultural taboos prevented a discussion of even a possibility of Soviet men's alternative behavior. The exception were the male protagonists in the films by Andrei Tarkovsky and Vasily Shukshin, heroes who, however, always ended up as tragic figures (as well as the authors themselves, who both died young). Another typical male protagonist was represented in the trend of a neo-superfluous man—a bright, but spiritually impotent, indifferent and egocentric hero—a Byronic type of Soviet Stagnation. This gifted man, a potential leader and cultural hero, was originated by the dramatist Alexandr Vampilov and reflected in many films. He represented the regime's dangerous rival, who was so to speak politically castrated, or destroyed young, at an embryo stage, and therefore, incapable of any fight for good. A cynical hero who gave up the resistance or a noble but psychologically destroyed hero were the two alternative representations of man in Soviet culture of 1970-80s. Thus, the choice of a controversial female protagonist reflected the true state of things in film culture and social reality, as well as the metalanguage of gender (re)presentation with regard to debatable ideological issues of Stagnation.

Although the Collective Body is essentially a Birth-giving Body—*Rodovoe Telo*—Bakhtin nevertheless does not give a preference to either of the genders. It is only in their collaboration with each other, as well as with the ancestors and progeny, that the genders can realize their ultimate roles. Bakhtin's gender role system is not a rigid or dated one. In the context of the Collective Body theory and gender roles in the modern world, the examples of *Commissar, Little Vera* and *Repentance* clarify what degree of deviation from a gender role can be considered destructive for the Collective Body. A physically infertile woman, like the heroine of *Repentance,* may become a savior of the Collective Body and its sacred instructor. She is connected with (and connecting) generations—the Collective Body's true past and future—better than the profane parents of the dictators' grandson (as well as profane parents of Little Vera). However, the seemingly fertile woman-commissar or a modern girl with little or no faith whatsoever would be considered destructive for the Collective Body's future. Although gender roles are emphasized in the theory of *Rodovoe Telo,* their interaction does not represent an arithmetic, but rather "algebra of culture." Not purely simple corporeal acts, but the integrity of biological-social-cultural behavior determines one's contribution to the ultimate goals of the Collective Body of Genus.

Among many issues raised by the film, its key semantic discovery is connected primarily with the representation and conceptualization of death—something entirely new for Soviet culture, where the aging regime referred to the issue of death as one of the main taboos, both from the perspective of ideology and religion. According to ancestor belief—extremely significant religious modality in both Georgian and Russian cultural history—the spirits, who often enter culture's narrative space, are the souls of the fathers, the dead ancestors. The relationship with the dead touches upon the very soul of the living—the essence and self-identification of culture. In Soviet culture, the meaning of death was a controversial cultural taboo: it was almost prohibited to talk, write, speculate on issues of death, as well as to show death in images of art. Death had existed within the official Soviet culture exclusively as a signifier of political heroism, an ideologically correct self-sacrificial action. The meaning of death functioned in Soviet culture only in the form of the symbolic death of political heroes justified by the forthcoming communist future. From the perspective of the history of meanings, it is especially interesting how innovative, and at the same time, traditional, "ritual" was the interpretation of death in the film by Abuladze. *Repentance* was the first Soviet film that on both its syntagmatic and paradigmatic levels was determined by the symbolism of death. The conceptualization of death within the semiosphere of a given culture is one of the most important aspects in symbolic anthropology and understanding film as ritual. The dead metaphorically represent important and diverse issues associated with past mode of the Collective Body. According to the anthropology of meaning, the concept of death may take the form of a symbol or a metaphor within a given cultural semiosphere. The concept of death may include the image-meaning of the founding father of culture, of state, or religion, as, for example, in Christianity. As is typical for ancestor belief, various ideological systems include a projection of a powerful ancestor-deity on the various realms of culture, and often are based on the system of meanings derived from the conceptualization of the projected image of the founding father.

According to Turner, in Christianity "death sums up and epitomizes the quality of an individual life;"[37] death tends to become a 'pure' signifier—a mark for good or bad behavior, a proper moment of evaluation according to a certain (moral) system of values. Death in Christianity is a kind of price, cost, result, or a grade given for the life lived, which, in the context of the cultural projection/symbolization of the deceased Father, will affect all his people. However, in Christianity, death does not have a material, substantial, metaphorical transformative or highly symbolic dimension, such as the ritual dimension brought to the film's discussion of death. Ritual consciousness regards death as another modality of life, as a transformative quality able to change the very essence of one's living, the very structure of the whole world. In the semiosphere of ritual mythology, where the signifier has been dissolved into the signified, the meaning of death is not separated from the body of the living, the Ancestral Body from the Collective Body.

Turner stressed that those who cannot achieve the ritual goal (initiation, transformation and obtaining a sacred knowledge) are stuck in limbo—they are "the dead of Purgatory."[38] It is precisely what is re-created in *Repentance*—a space of Purgatory, where the initiated keeper of the sacred knowledge makes sure that the uninitiated does not pass the threshold he is not entitled to cross. The dead, as also emphasized by Turner, are concerned with "extra-structural modalities": biological (or 'natural') and spiritual. According to Turner, the dead are thought to mediate between the invisible, ideal world of paradigms and archetypes and the sensorially perceptible world. But the dead are also regarded as *powers,* as themselves being the force that through the greenfuse thrusts the shoot and through the loins and wombs of human beings thrust progeny.[39] Preventing the film's antagonist from gaining the power of the dead ancestor is the plot of *Repentance,* as a film-ritual. In the interstitial, interfacial realm of the ritual process, Turner stressed, "the dead are conceived of as transformative agencies and as mediating between various domains... birth and death, structure and communitas, person and God, culture and nature, visibility and invisibility, past and present, human and animal, and many more fundamental dyads."[40] Varlam the Monster, the archetypal dictator of *Repentance,* most definitely was not a suitable candidate for a mediator and meaning-maker of the culture's future. *Repentance* facilitated the restoration of the meaning of death in its diversity, authentic ritual tradition and its profound connection to culture as a whole. Exploding in 1986 like an ideological bomb, the film helped society to understand itself in the new political situation of *perestroika*—a time for the transformative rite of passage of the entire Soviet culture.

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[1] On the importance of the rites of passage in modern cultures, see Ronald Grimes, *Marrying and Burying: Rites of Passage in Men's Life* (Boulder, 1996). On the traditional rituals of birth, marriage and death in Russian cultural tradition, see the three-volume series, V. Kusmenko, ed., *The Ritual of Baptism in*

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*Russian Orthodoxy, The Ritual of Wedding in Russian Orthodoxy, and the Ritual of Funeral in Russian Orthodoxy* (Moscow, 1996).

[2] For other interpretations of the three famous *perestroika* movies, see the books by Attwood, Lawton, Horton, Shalapenshtok, Galischenko, Zorkaya, etc. See endnote No. 6.

[3] Interestingly, films which represented Russia at the 1997 International Toronto Film Festival had the titles and themes as simple as *Brother* (by A. Balabanov), and *Mother and Son* (by A. Sokurov). It is characteristic that in the situation of semantic and axiological disintegration, culture turns to the deepest, eternal and archetypal meanings of the kinship connection and family unity—the meaning of the Collective Body.

[4] It was the first and only film by the brilliant director. After the prohibition of *Commissar,* Askoldov has never been allowed to work as a filmmaker in the Soviet Union. According to Galischenko, Askoldov chose a Jewish theme although he was not of Jewish heritage himself; he was a son of a political commissar who was arrested in Stalin's '30s purges. "*Commissar* was hidden by Askoldov's wife for 20 years until it made an unscheduled, virtually clandestine appearance at the 1987 Moscow International Film Festival. Its screening was prompted by loud requests from American guests, and it has since reached wider audiences in both the East and West." Galischenko, *Glasnost—Soviet Cinema Responds,* 62.

[5] The Russian word 'komissar' comes from the Latin 'commissary' meaning one to whom any duty is specially committed or entrusted. It has a connection with earlier Latin 'commiss'—meaning 'combined, put together.'

[6] There is a discrepancy in the translation of the Russian title *Komissar* in English: some sources on Soviet cinema use article "the" (The Commissar), while others do not. The former implies that the film narrates the story of a particular person—the commissar; however, I argue that the film is rather a meditation on the very meaning of "commissar"—the spiritual leader, the sacred instructor, in the Soviet system vs. the semiosphere of the Collective Body. As is typical for the semantics of film titles in English, the definite article refers to a particular subject, while the omitted article indicates a generalization. Thus, the title *Commissar* is used in this study.

[7] Here and further in the text, characters' proper names will be introduced, but will often be omitted in the analysis, to emphasize the paradigmatic nature of ritual symbolism. On the symbolic meaning of the Mother in world culture, see Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype* (Princeton, 1972).

[8] Nonna Mordiukova was well-known as the actress who symbolized Russia. It is in this capacity that she was chosen to play Ulia Gromova, a heroic young fighter against fascism in *The Young Guard* by Sergei Gerasimov, then an illiterate but passionate young country wife (a symbol of the people) competing with a young teacher (intelligentsia) for her man (state) in the Thaw movie *The Affair Which Happened in Pen'kovo.* And it is in this capacity, as an actress-symbol, that she was exploited by Nikita Mikhalkov in

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his film *Kinfolk*, a parody on Soviet cultural values. On *Commissar*, see more Anninsky, *The Movement of the 1960s and We.*

[9] The Jewish father in *Commissar* was played by Rolan Bykov—famous Soviet film director and actor. His name will appear twice more in the text, as he was the participant in two film-rituals to be further discussed: in *Scarecrow*, as the film's director, and in *Andrei Roublev*, as the actor who played the Buffoon, Minstrel, the very spirit of art—the killed but resurrected Artist of ancient Russia.

[10] Anninsky, *The Movement of the 1960s and We*, 229.

[11] See Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, the chapter "Color Classification in Ndembu Ritual: A Problem in Primitive Classification," 59-93.

[12] Ibid., 65, 69-70.

[13] See, Joanna Hubb, *Mother Russia: Feminine Myth in Russian Culture* (Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1988) and Helena Goscilo, "The Gendered Trinity of Russian Cultural Rhetoric Today—or The Glyph of the H(i)eroine" in *Soviet Hieroglyphics: Visual Culture in Late Twentieth-Century Russia*, ed. Nancy Condee (Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1995). Günther in his "Big Family" emphasizes the feminine archetype as a dominant symbol in Russian culture. He accurately points out that on the Russian ground, the archetype of the mother is manifest primarily in three images: Mother-Land, *Bogoroditsa* (Virgin, in Russian: The One Giving Birth to God) and the image of the Own Mother. The pagan cult of the Mother was reincarnated in *Bogoroditsa*. The Russian equivalent to the Greek image of the king of cosmos is the feminine image of the Mother-Land—it is first of all a black, birth-giving womb of the nurturing land, as it is often called *mat' syra zemlia* (the mother-raw earth), Günther, "Big Family," 106.

[14] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 22.

[15] Ibid., 23.

[16] For on this, see Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Jane Monnig Atkinson, "Man the Hunter and Woman: Metaphors for the Sexes in Ilongot Magical Spells," 129-30.

[17] Ibid., 140.

[18] On this matter, see the two-part documentary film by Semen Aranovich *Bol'shoi kontsert narodov* (Great Peoples' Concert, 1990)—the exposure of Soviet antisemitism and persecution of Jewish scholars and artists in Stalin's time.

[19] On the study of fertility rituals with respect to literary criticism, see for example, an early essay by Northrop Frye, "The Fertility Cults," in *Northrop Frye's Early Papers, 1932-1938*, ed. Robert D. Denham (Toronto, 1997).

[20] *Little Vera* was widely shown in the West in the years of perestroika, and in less than one year was seen by 50 millions viewers only in the USSR. On the film, see, for example, Anna Lawton: "This realistic commentary on the disintegration of the social fabric, starting from within a working-class family, includes all the features of a Western-type melodrama: generation gap, alienated youth, romance, violence,

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alcoholism, death, drugs, attempted suicide, and sex for good measure... For the first time the stigma of *poshlost'* (lack of spiritual values), traditionally an attribute of the petty bourgeoisie, is here placed on the working class. These are people of "little faith." As the title suggests, and they are even unaware of it... The responsibility for the present situation is laid flatly at the parents' feet... And the film offers no future for little Vera and her companion." Lawton, *Kinoglasnost,* 192.

[21] Ibid., 193.

[22] It is a well-known fact, described by many sociologists and demographers, that, during the recent decade, the mortality rate in Russia is higher that birth rate.

[23] A Soviet variation of the "angry young women," it was a critical trend in literature, theater and cinema, led by Liudmila Petrushevskaia, Tatiana Tolstaia, Liudmila Razumovskaia, Alla Sokolova and Maria Khmelik, the scriptwriter of *Little Vera.* Many of their short stories and original scripts became a basis for movies, thus affecting to a great extent anti-official film culture and mass consciousness. Among the most notable movies of this trend, with the scripts written by the women, should be named *Fariat'ev's Fantasies* by Alla Sokolova, and *Dear Elena Sergeevna* by Liudmila Rasumovskaia,

[24] The style and problematics of *Little Vera* are striking evidence for the ideas by Baudrillard: "*Sexuality is but a ritual of transparency.* Where once it had to be hidden, sexuality today hides what little remains of reality, and, of course, participates in all of this disembodied passion... Nudity is but a desperate attempt to emphasize the existence of something. The genitalia is but a special effect," in his *The Ecstasy of Communication* (New York, 1988), 32. Interestingly, in the chapter "Rituals of Transparency," Baudrillard addresses the exact same set of cultural problems that are manifest in Bakhtin's theory of the Collective Body. The only difference between the two philosophers is that one focuses on the modalities of presence of the Collective Body, and the other on the tragedy of absence.

[25] This theme was a primary focus of the well-known film and theatre plots, *Cruel Games* by the dramatist Alexei Arbuzov, and *My Dear, Beloved, the Only One* by the filmmaker Dinara Asanova. In both stories, teenage girls kidnapped little babies and claim themselves to be their mothers for their own purposes.

[26] The latter is the divorced father of the eight-year old, who tortures his daughter on the visitation telling her with fascination the stories of old India's burial rituals which prescribed the living wife to die on the burial fire with her dead husband, something he possibly has in mind for his own estranged wife. The episode manifests the film's irony, metatextuality on the level of ritual symbolism and the "sex is death" metaphorism characteristic of *Little Vera*'s system of meanings.

[27] The invention of psychological grotesque is associated primarily with Russian theatre of the 1920-30s, and with the names of the great directors and actors Evgeny Vakhtangov, Vsevolod Meierkhold, and Mikhail Chekhov.

[28] B. Alpers, "*Teatr sotsial'noi maski*" (The Theatre of Social Mask) in his *Teatral'nye ocherki* (Essays on Theater), 2 vol. Vol.1. (Moscow, 1977).

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[29] Here is a reference to the root-metaphor of the classical nineteenth-century novel *Mertvye dushi* (Dead Souls) by Nikolai Gogol, which has generated numerous inter- and metatextual connections in Russian and Soviet cultures.

[30] An apartment was an extremely important issue for Soviet people, almost the only conditional 'property' and a chance to gain a living space, for those who lived in towns and cities. See on this matter Yuri Trifonov's story Obmen ([Apartment] Exchange). The goverment distributed living space, which was impossible to get any other way, according to the number of family members. Thus, two parents with one child would get a two-room (one bedroom) apartment, but with two children—already a three-room (two bedroom) apartment. The difference was crucial for the future of any family.

[31] With respect to the state of symbolic death represented by the film structure, the following observation on *Repentance* is important: "The narrative structure is disorienting because of time discontinuity and unmarked transitions between reality, dream, memories, and fantasy... Abuladze created a surrealist tale of horror and set it in an imagery time and place to endow it with a universal significance." Anna Lawton, ed., "Introduction: An Interpretive Survey" in *The Red Screen*, 12.

[32] Varlam also bears resemblance to Beria—the member of Stalin's government responsible for mass purges—the main executioner in Soviet totalitarian history. Both Stalin and Beria were of Georgian origin, which made the issues of the film a special moral responsibility for Georgian antitotalitarian culture. Varlam's appearance was signified by the most characteristic feature of each of the three dictators.

[33] On the ritual representation of power in Soviet culture, see two important articles by Mikhail Yampolsky, "In the Shadow of Monuments: Notes on Iconoclasm and Time" in *Soviet Hieroglyphics*, and "The Rhetoric of Representation of Political Leaders in Soviet Culture," *Elementa* (1 1993): 101-113.

[34] The tradition of "abolishing death" is analyzed, for example, in the book by Irene Masing-Delic, *Abolishing Death: A Salvation Myth in Russian Twentieth-Century Literature* (Stanford, 1992).

[35] On death and war, see Nina Tumarkin, *The Living & The Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York, 1994).

[36] This was also the case with *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (made by Armenian director Paradjanov at a Ukrainian studio and on the basis of Ukrainian materials); with *Andrei Roublev*, the great and for years prohibited film by Andrei Tarkovsky on Russia's medieval past—reinterpretation of Russian history; with *Nobody Wanted to Die* (*Nikto ne khotel umirat'*, by Lithuanian director V. Zhulakiavichus); and other outstanding films.

[37] Turner, *Process, Performance and Pilgrimage: A Study in Comparative Symbology*, 131.

[38] Ibid., 137.

[39] Ibid., 127.

[40] Ibid., 142.

# Chapter 5. Rituals of Initiation: *Scarecrow, Freeze-Die-Revive!*

This chapter explores the transition from the childhood to adulthood and rituals of initiation in Soviet cinema as a manifestation of the symbolic death-rebirth. Turner stressed that the symbolic-metaphorical death in the rites of passage puts the initiands in the "in-between state of life-in-death, like the seed with rotting husk but thrusting cotyledon in the ground." This liminal condition, Turner pointed out, "may be turned to fruitful account if it is made by ritual to lead to an opening up for the initiand of the communitas dimension outside of social structure."[1] The chapter will discuss two films which represent a ritual of initiation in the most striking, vivid and controversial way; the chapter will also draw upon such notions as the ***ritual figure, ritual object, ritual mask*** and ***ritual space.***

## *Scarecrow*

The Soviet Censorship Committee was highly resistant to the release of *Scarecrow* (*Chuchelo,* 1984).[2] To be able to get a permit for his movie's release, Rolan Bykov, the famous film director and actor (Jewish father in *Commissar*), as the cinematic legend tells, had no choice but to apply directly to Andropov, the Soviet KGB leader at that time. Only because of Andropov's "special permission," the film was released without being shelved or destroyed.[3] *Scarecrow* exposed the decay of the Soviet Collective Body—in a striking and innovative way—through the image of its destroyed potential, the children. The young, representing the "country's bright future," had always been a sacred topic for the official Soviet culture. Hundreds of films about young heros and pioneers, role models, had been manufactured by the state film industry for the children—the Gorky studio. From there, polished images of the perfect little "constructors of communism" were distributed all over the country. Narrating the story of grade-sixers who torture each other in a small town, north of Moscow, *Scarecrow* raised a question, "whom we are really bringing up in this country?" The film exposed *Our Children* as little monsters, making the audience to feel fear about the future and acknowledge a reality check in respect to the myth of the Soviet children.

The story line is built around a situation of alleged betrayal within the group of schoolmates—something "archetypal" for Soviet ideologized culture with its paranoiac never-ending search for traitors. The whole class sneaked out of school to go to the movies, pretending to be confused about the schedule. Someone reported to the authorities that no misunderstanding actually took place: the class was just tricking the school administration. As a result of the investigation, the whole class was punished by being deprived of a long-awaited bus tour—an all-paid holiday to Moscow. "Who was the informer?"—becomes a subject of children's most passionate inquisition inside their own group. A new girl Lena claimed responsibility, protecting her friend, and taking another's guilt upon herself. She did it out of respect for and faith in the boy, yet unaware of the degree of hatred to which she exposed herself. The real informer, however, would cowardly never admit his deed. And the group does not bother to check (so simple!—just asking the teacher), because a newcomer, a stranger is such a convenient "villain." Once compromised, Lena was unable to stop the escalating ostracism against her. The boy's double betrayal (of the class and then of her friendship), as well as everyone's readiness to blame and hunt her come as a shock to Lena. However—as if testing the others' morality and humanity (a metatextual connection to *Idiot* of Dostoevsky)—she stubbornly keeps her silence. The children's frustration—not only with the school punishment—but also with the conditions of social life (fatherless childhood, poverty, hopelessness and boredom) boils into the violence, which horrified the film audience. Involving and parodying the narrative archetypes of *Romeo and Juliet,* trial and investigative stories, as well as popular themes of Soviet children's culture ("youth patriotic games"), Bykov reinterprets traditional issues, re-focusing them on new meanings.

*Scarecrow* has one archetypal protagonist, a symbolic stranger, newcomer, whom it is so easy to blame for everything bad in the "community." The film also employs another innovative type of hero—the collective protagonist—the Crowd, which turns out also to be the film's antagonist, the initiator of a lynching. The film's "cruel realism" (similar to that of *Little Vera*) combines social critique with symbolism that gradually unfolds into a ritual dimension. The *Scarecrow*'s collective protagonist—grandchildren of Commissar and Varlam, and Little Vera's little siblings (or the "scorpion's progeny"—the "would-be-born" children from soldier Kochetkov and his fiancée)—is a historically logical sprout of the almost century-long political experiments on the Collective Body.[4] *Scarecrow* shows the young parts of the Collective Body, the children, "little creatures" to be abandoned and deformed, thus reflecting on its potential tragic future. The *Scarecrow*'s youngsters represent part of the Collective Body that is dysfunctional, undeveloped, deprived of its roots, spiritually cut from ancestors, yet still growing in a sick and twisted direction. Investigating the roots of the collective tragedy, the film shows that every child belongs to a dysfunctional family. Each of the children and their parents are completely disoriented within the context of the Collective Body's ultimate function, representing a lost piece of the collective immortality. The tragedy is intensified by the fact that the heros enter the age of initiation. Their age of passage, of a sacred instruction—Big Moment (in Turner's terms), which never comes—reinforces their separation from the ritual route, and increases their deep frustration and disorientation. The film's pre-teens symbolize not only alienated, but also wild, shaken and crazed parts of the Collective Body—its raging and raving segments. The Collective Body model analyzed in *Scarecrow* is shown as having completely lost its connection with the ancestors (spiritual tradition). Equally disconnected from the past and the future, this "collective body" is turning on itself—destroying its own vital parts.

The group in the film is a model of the Soviet society. Typically turning against its best members, the "ideological body" sacrifices them, burying them inside its own dark controversial feelings. The sacrificial need, according to Girard, has been always the ritual way to discharge unresolved and unidentifiable social tensions. When these children become adults, what type of relationship would they represent?—the film asks. The image of the *Scarecrow*-children is a representation of cultural and political chronotope, a reflection of the Soviet era 1980s and an anticipation of the destiny—a model of the dysfunctional Collective Body of the future. The protagonist, Lena, is a scapegoat, a sacrificial victim, whose death would supposedly contribute to the change and potential healing of society. She is a ritual fool, the one who *does not understand* the common sense logic. Under the scrutiny of her naive inquiring eyes, and her chosen ritual silence, the whole system of meanings of the children's group—a model of Soviet society—with the paranoiac search for enemies and scape-goats, with the need to kill, to destroy someone chosen for the ritual enemy-role reveals its true meaning as a dangerous absurdity and self-destruction of the Collective Body. The matrix identity, paradoxical and yet fruitful identification of oneself with the other within some functioning unity, receives in such a system a form of negative identification—a ritual reflection /manifestation of suspicion and aggression. In a model of a highly distressed society, a ritual figure which is intended to represent a negative identification within the Collective Body will inevitably appear. In *Scarecrow,* the girl is also an *izgoi,* an outcast, denouncer—a ritual figure, traditional sacrificial victim in Russian culture that received special meaning in the years of late Soviet totalitarianism.[5]

The episode of the ritual killing—burning of the "scarecrow"—a figure that represents the main character, strange girl, in the narrative—has striking and multidimensional ritual and cultural connotations.[6] With its graphic representation of the sacrificial ritual, the burning was one of the most explicit ritual scenes in Soviet film culture, especially horrifying as it was (re)invented and performed by "kids."[7] It is not only that human dignity and integrity are destroyed in the sacrificial ritual, but the episode is full of suspense, of the anticipation of physical reprisal. The episode of ritual killing in *Scarecrow* has references to pressing issues of modern times: street and gang violence, trials and purgatory gatherings in Soviet society, ideological witch-hunting on both sides of the Cold War. The ritual killing also has references to metacultural and archetypal meanings: Medieval witch-burning, the execution of Joan of Arc and, finally Christ's crucifixion. Tied to the cross, the wooden doll, Lena's ritual substitution, dressed in her real clothing, was also a reference to black magic rituals. The key episode of *Scarecrow* can be also seen as a performance by a gang—young and already "dark souls" of "voodoo ritual" (as it is called in the West), designed to destroy a symbolic enemy.[8]

Although the main character was given at school the nickname Scarecrow, it was not the Lena who was signified by the movie as a monstrous mask. It was the "nice" Soviet children who were symbolically shown as "devilish little creatures."[9] Scarecrow, the ritual name of the protagonist and the film itself, becomes a name-signification, ritual "change of fate"; and the narrative revelation, the anticipation of further events. The word "scarecrow" (*chuchelo*) has three meanings in Russian—all are deep-rooted in the ritual system of meanings and are integrated in the plot and in the story. The first means an object which has been used since ancient times to scare the birds in the gardens.[10] This wooden figure is traditionally dressed in torn human clothing and a big hat, and originates from the ritual figure—guardian spirit or deity of the harvest (thus, a symbolic guardian of the Collective Body's survival). This wooden idol, similar to other wooden idols of ancient religions, was intended to create and protect a sacred space where the fruits can grow, thus providing for the community's Collective Body's future. *Chuchelo* also means a stuffed animal, whose life-like skin, as often believed, still contained the animal's spirit—the unexhausted legacy of totemism. The skin, hide in many cultures symbolizes a magic channel to the beyond.[11] From the standpoint of the anthropology of meanings, modern Russian culture still preserves this multidimensional ritual symbolism on the level of collective cultural memory and, particularly, art. In Russian folk tradition a scarecrow is connected with both, the alternative elementa of laughter and fear. It can be perceived as a comic figure, as well as a frightening, fantastic one. Scarecrow represents a type of magic figure widely used in Romanticism, which resignified the meaning of an ancient ritual mask and brought it back from "low" popular to "high" modern culture (modernist masks, voodoo dolls, postmodern mannequins, etc.). The scarecrow, as a figure of both ritual /symbolic and literal/practical (agricultural) meanings, has an obvious link to ancient Slavs' pantheon of deities. The polysemantic ritual symbolism of the scarecrow was used in the film to reveal and emphasize the tragic loss of sacred meanings and the increasing ritual need in the life of the Soviet people.

The scarecrow also has a contemporary mocking, ironic, comic meaning, functioning in Russian as an obscene word intended to offend, to stress a person's ugly appearance. It is widely used in modern Russian language in name-calling among children.[12] When Lena first came to the new class, she got immediately the nick-name Chuchelo—Scarecrow. Thus, the options for the above mentioned semantic developments within the narrative become open. By getting this nickname, the girl was mysteriously signified, certainly beyond the children's rational understanding, as well as beyond that of majority of spectators, as an ambivalent image and ritual symbol. The first signification is that of the ritual fool, the sacrificial animal, someone lower than the others. At the same time, she was signified as a magic creature, an idol, a deity unrecognized by the uninitiated hateful crowd, someone higher than the others in understanding the true meaning of life. As is essential for the semiotics of ritual, sacred knowledge is opposed to the profane knowledge, to the trivial obvious established 'tuth' versus hidden difficult subversive 'truth'—revelation. Therefore, often it is an unexpected figure—a woman, a child, an outsider, an artist or a fool, who is proved by the narrative to be a carreer of the sacred knowledge, and thus someone profoundly connected with the Collective Body's mental function. And the reverse becomes a sad social reality: the one who has sacred knowledge, an 'insider' to the world of sacred meanings, the beyond, simply cannot comprehend the social laws of the 'normal' world and becomes, as the film shows, a constant outsider to it. In the very composition of the ritual burning /killing episode, in its graphic imagery, spatial conception and cathartic rhythm, the metacultural connotations with Joan of Ark and the fire, as well as with Christ and the crucifixion are emphasized.

The ritual power of image is interwoven in the plot not just as a part of the story, but as an integral and determining meaning within the whole semantics of the plot (metasemantics of the film manifests itself as a magic representation, a metaritual). The motif of magic representation appears in the movie three times at the crucial moments of dramatic development—in the plot, climax and denouement. The magic of image, the intrinsic ritual power of any representation generates iconofilic religiosity: ritualism of modern cinema is one of its evident manifestations. This was exactly why Judaism prohibited the image-drawing of both god and human beings: *ritual naming* and *ritual representation* are inseparable from the *ritual taboo*. In this, Judaism addressed the potential signification (acquiring magic power/re-distribution of the magic power) of those portrayed.[13]

The naming/portraying of the girl as a *Chuchelo* in the beginning becomes a plot of the film, gradually revealing what a signification, a giving of a name can do (unfolding the film's metasemantic aspect). The name—giving and name-calling become a trigger of future events; they become *ritual naming,* which inevitably awake magic powers hidden in the name/image of Chuchelo. The plots of crucifixion and of the god's recognition in the crucified reveal the paradoxical reversed identity of the prey and/as a deity (both are interconnected plots, as is well-known from anthropology and Christian culture). The first is re-presentation by the name, which is shown as possessing magic powers. The second is representation by the mask—the girl as a scarecrow. A ritual name and a ritual mask, *Chuchelo* was "offered" in the plot with an obvious narrative-sacrificial function—that of the tragic hero, scapegoat. It *was predetermined* that the tragic hero would be burnt, crucified, sacrificed—exactly what happens at the very moment of dramatic climax.

An ordinary girl, Lena, signified in the context of the ritual function, is being re-presented as a symbolic "name"/image and tortured in the name of all ritual sacrificial victims.

The denouement is in the controversial miraculous re-presentation of the "ugly" girl as *The Beautiful Lady* (Cinderella motif), who emerged from the past, from an old painting, radiating her spiritual power in the reality of the present. The old portrait symbolizes the girls' kin connection—via the Collective Body—with the divine legendary nineteen-century lady, who appears to be her great-grandmother. The picture demonstrates a striking similarity—the identity of the two women—the modern girl and her powerful ancestor. The picture, showing the face of a divine beauty, the image of ancestor suddenly revealed through the face of the girl-outcast, becomes the film's ritual revelation—this is the sacred message communicated to the astounded characters, school crowd. This moment—the insight—is a film-ritual's "Big Moment," which establishes the connection with the Great Time among the characters and viewers. The two women appear to be one: through their mysterious identity, the film manifests the circular chronotope of the Collective Body. The ritual revelation unites the person and the image, the present and the past, the girl next-door and the legendary beauty, the tortured and the powerful, the living and the dead, the progeny and the ancestry, thus representing the matrix identity of the Collective Body—the integral protagonist of the film and culture.

The picture and the image represent magic powers of art, the sacred message hidden in images and words from the ancestors to the future. The film as art manifests itself as the channel to sacred knowledge, without which no generation can survive. The insight (or recognition—the moment in drama theory when the truth opens to the characters) in *Scarecrow* reveals that an ordinary person, even one who is despised and humiliated by the others, may be deeply connected with "magic powers" and sacred eternal values. The image of the girl-"scarecrow" carries a condensed matrix identity and chain of symbolic references: herself and the shade, every mother's mother—echoed, mirrored and multiplied in infinite succession, within the image on the old portrait, another symbol of the Collective Body.

Lena's Grandfather—and the grandson of The Beautiful Lady—is the keeper and the giver, in the film's ritual semantics, or, in Propp's terms, the donor of sacred knowledge.[14] His character is associated with the Collective Body's most important symbolic functions—the connection with ancestors, Great Time and culture—with the transmission of the sacred instruction. A strange man, a kind of a village fool (played by Yuri Nikulin, a famous Soviet clown of a Chaplin's type), Grandfather lives an isolated life and is the object of town dwellers' mockery. His granddaughter, clumsy and naive, follows his path: immediately becoming the object of everybody's fun as soon as she arrives in town. The Grandfather, who earned a good military pension, is perceived as 'not from this world' for living in poverty in the big house and spending all his money on the old painting. The neighbors think that old pictures he collects from people's attics and basements are nothing but trash. These pictures have no "established," recognized value, in other words, cannot be turned into money. The film implies that the value of art as a sacred instruction, is 'hidden,' unknown, yet "unrecognized"; it is a secret coded language, designed for transmitting a sacred message only from the initiating to the initiated. Grandfather has not always been 'not from this world,' so estranged from reality and common sense: he was a *warrior* in the past. A World War II soldier, he had his share of real life and death battles, his glory for victory over enemies—the fascists. He has had his sacred initiation; not only a symbolic, but real death crossed his paths. Now, as a war veteran, he can live carefree on a good military pension. But the old Major chooses not to live upon past glory, but to look for sacred knowledge for the sake of the future.

It is indicative for Soviet culture that a symbolic keeper of sacred knowledge in the film is a former warrior, not a priest (the official church has been compromised in mass consciousness by the collaboration with the regime). Grandfather's sacred knowledge is not imposed by any established supremacy, or external sacral authority, nor is it imposed by others, deities, ancestors, etc. It has grown through his life experience; it is in this life and world that the sacred knowledge originate. It grew in Grandfather's trials, the "ritual journeys" of Stalin's history and war. There are other authorities in the film besides the old veteran—official authorities: school administration, the keepers and givers of the official lies, of profane knowledge, in Propp's terms.[15] The "stone figure" of the school principal, an ironic "live monument" of Soviet hypocrisy, greets children at the gates of official knowledge. The Soviet school is thus signified as a sphere of the profane. And the home-room teacher, the "mentor" reveals her identity as the opposite to the meaning of sacred instructor. The film sarcastically shows that "Soviet teachers" (another sacred meaning of propaganda) appointed by the regime not only have no sacred vision, that of the initiating, but are almost "blind" even in a literal sense. The "advisor" and home-room teacher is unable to see lies and violence under her very nose. The "profane instructors" have no clue as to —what is going on in the "tough" children's world—the ostracism and torture of the newcomer, mental and physical abuse. The two worlds crash into each other, but paradoxically never really "meet" (interact)—that of the "kids," a lost tribe, and that of the authorities, represented by the "Soviet school." By showing two separate worlds, as if existing behind the glass wall of different systems of meanings, *Scarecrow* revealed the increasing gap within Soviet society. As a film-ritual, it focuses attention at this breach, and attempts to bridge it in a redressive action.

The condition of the keeper's sacred gift—the ritual of initiation—deserves special investigation. Grandfather's—war hero's—experience in this and "other" worlds (in the lands of the living and the dead) has revealed for him that ritual knowledge can be donated only to the initiated. He collects old paintings without showing them to others. He hides pictures in his big old house because he has not yet found one who is deserving to be initiated into the sacred values of old art. In terms of the ritual-narrative semantics, the donor of the sacred knowledge has not yet found a hero who can become a new keeper of the *sacra*. The town—a model of the actual state of the deformed Collective Body—

obviously does not care about old art (sacred values), does not understand the keeper and his ritual actions. As the film shows, the town (represented by a symbolic never-grown-up violent crowd) is not ready yet to be initiated. The children, little monsters, as the film warns, may be irreparably damaged and never able to comprehend any "sacred instruction." One of the boys, a "good fellow," legitimate classmate, young member of society, routinely makes pocket money by catching street dogs and selling them to *zhivodery* (literally, those who "tear skin off the ones alive")—the dealers of an underground business which manufactures soap and hats from homeless animals.

The old man first thinks that his own granddaughter is too inexperienced and young for the complexity of sacred knowledge, for the rite of passage. Nonetheless, she cannot escape initiation: the rite of passage is destined to be performed one way or another. Lena is submitted to the initiation by a wild school crowd: the horrifying mixture of deformed modern rituals—teenagers' gang initiation and ritual of social sacrifice. The "people" of the *Scarecrow* world have no recollection of the authentic ritual tradition. Out of bits and pieces of the missing historical memory (broken cultural code), they re-create their own monstrous ceremonies. Deprived of transformative energy and sacred communication, their symbolic performance of ritual sacrifice leads to the spiritual death of the participants. And it is, as the films implies, not a temporary spiritual death, but rather a final sentence—"without possibility for rebirth."

The Girl is the only one in the town, besides the collector himself, who has access to spiritual faces of the dead ancestors. She lives surrounded by beautiful pictures on the walls of the old house. Their power, divinity and knowledge of something vitally important, but forgotten by the living, is manifest through the magic of old art. Whether from the walls (pictures as "revelations," "writings on the walls") or intrinsically, from some hidden unconscious connection with her ancestors, with the family spiritual tradition, "Scarecrow" appears to be the one who is perceptive to the sacred system of meanings/values. Although the grandfather does not give her the benefit of sacred communication, the initiation, life arranges the initiation in an unpredictable and cruel way. The ritual of initiation comes from the hands of the children, junior high school gang—not initiated themselves and the progeny of the never initiated. Lena's experience, as tormenting and painful as it gets, paradoxically turns to be a profoundly meaningful, liberating experience, a ritual death-rebirth. It becomes a true initiation into life's real values, exposing her own strength and previously hidden ability to recognize good and to oppose evil.

The binary oppositions of the obvious/concealed, profane/sacred are gradually manifested through the film's dialectics of mask and face, the old motif, transcending each other in the play of codes of the world culture. Ritual masks/roles and the "masking" of ritual events paradoxically unfold their hidden identities. The betrayer—popular boy, with whom Lena falls in love—wears the social mask of a young hero, pretending to be honest, sincere, courageous. These qualities are his cover, not his "face." His disguise of the defender-savior hides soul of a coward and decoy. The film plays upon the controversy of face and mask, making the metaphorical interplay between them visible when Lena's "best friend" frightens her in her own house hiding behind a monstrous mask of a hog, to force her to leave town and carry away her knowledge of his betrayal. Lena's mask of scarecrow carries a stigma of ugliness and evil, which appears to be a false meaning that conceals a true face of virtue. Actions also have their "faces" and "masks." Lena's ritual sacrifice is called by the class a "fair trial." It was initiated by another little monster—a little girl with a nickname Iron Button. A brainwashed passionate fanatic, she wears a social mask of the "fighter for justice," which turns to reveal a face of naive cruelty discharged by young stigmatized hateful souls.

The film-ritual, as a ritual should indeed, results in the *donation of the sacra.* The Grandfather gives his house and all his treasures as a gift to the town for, he hopes, a future museum. There is no "museum"—the sacred space—in the town, in the film's symbolic chronotope. Thus, it is a symbolic donation to the future, as nobody is really there, in the film's reality, to accept (and comprehend) the sacred gift. As there are no *the initiated* around, capable of appreciating the gift of the donor, Grandfather's ritual giving is an anonymous donation *to all* and to the future.

After the tragedy (ritual killing) happens to the film protagonist—the irreparable damage to the present, the old man and the girl leave town, heading nowhere by river. It is the *River of Time*—an archetypal metaphor of the world culture, one of the references to the meaning of Great Time. They feel they had to go, leaving behind the big old house, where generations lived, the sacred space where the Collective Body resided for centuries. Maybe, donated to the people as a museum, the old house will revive one day as a ritual and space. With the whole collection of art, sacred messages directed towards the future, the ancestors' home may once again reappear as a sacred spiritual place. But no messages are left for the present within the film's textual borders. The only message is the film itself as a cultural text, a ritual communication: the medium in this case vividly manifests itself as the message.

The audience of *Scarecrow* was not supposed to learn where the grandfather and granddaughter are headed, as there is no true place for the giver and receiver of sacred knowledge in this world—Soviet reality of the 1980s. The gift left to the children—a donation to school—the portrait of The Beautiful Lady (simultaneously a portrait of Lena, the scarecrow—the ugly) has its hidden sacred instruction: treasure every child because everyone deserves to be respected. What seems to be ugliness or nuisance may turn out to be a divine power or beauty magically connected to the beyond. As such, any child possesses a value of the Collective Body, of life continuation. *Scarecrow* is full of metatextual and cultural references: it is a very sad fairy tale inversion, a *Cinderella*-story with an unhappy end. The prince turned out to be a coward and traitor; the girl never got to be a princess—she still remained a nobody, scarecrow. She and her magic helper have no choice but to go into exile. The children—little monsters—are weeping and crying by the end of the story: they sense that they have been participants in something wrong.

They are experiencing a painful shock, but barely a catharsis. There is no revelation, recognition, or re-interpretation, of what really happened with them and who they really are. The question remains of whether or not the children of *Scarecrow* would ever be capable to understand old art's 'sacred instruction'.

Nobody has come to say good bye to the girl and old man; only a military orchestra—a symbolic collective character—arrived on the empty deck to play in their honor an old sentimental march. The film's finale is signified by the ritual music—a symbolic communication, Russian culture's special code, associated with values of humanity and tradition. It is only the old military music (a symbolic yet pre-revolutionary image that combines in Russian cultural tradition the meaning of art and the glory of history). No one is seeing them off, nobody is connected to the pair of ritual fools, nobody cares. The two are leaving to an unknown destination. On the film's syntagmatic level, they are possibly looking for the girl's troubled mother—a missing link between the givers and receivers, the initiating and the initiated (the mother is symbolically absent, and the film does not explain where is she and why the parents cannot take care of their girl). They have almost no possessions, material things—this is clearly a tragic and symbolic ending that emphasizes the disconnection between the carriers/keepers of sacred knowledge with the rest of the people. On the symbolic paradigmatic level, an old man and a girl depart to the domain of spiritual values. Rolan Bykov, the filmmaker himself, plays the conductor, the only one who looks at the heroes with inexpressible pain in his all-understanding eyes. And his musical good-bye, a bitter, sad and still powerful march of war veterans, is a symbolic farewell from the artist, creator and giver—of his own film's sacred message—to the receivers in the film audience.

*Scarecrow*'s filmmaker, a prominent director of comedies and children's movies, as well as a famous tragic and comic actor, Rolan Bykov, played a significant role in Soviet antitotalitarian cinematography. Among his famous roles are the clownish Barmaley in *Oh-It-Hurts-66*, a parody on Soviet official art with its traditional villains

(*Ai-Bolit-66,* 1966), the imperishable buffoon, ritual fool, a symbol of Russian art in Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev,* and the Jewish father in *Commissar*, a keeper of the domain of sacred meanings—that of the family love and tradition. Bykov's sudden appearance in the farewell scene of *Scarecrow* is the artist's personal autograph, manifestation of autotextuality, intertextuality, metatextuality, etc., in terms of film semiotics, as well as revelation of the matrix identity of the Artist/Giver/Initiating within the macrocultural space.

### *Freeze-Die-Revive!*

*Freeze-Die-Revive!* (*Zamri, umri, voskresni,* by Vitaly Kanevsky, 1989) is a story of the twelve-year-old Romeo and Juliet, Valerka and Galia, preteens who grow up on the border of a Soviet concentration camp. The young heros' adventures, amazing, exciting and funny, inevitably end up in death, the nature of which is investigated by the film on various semantic levels. The film's chronotope is dominated by *the Zone* (Russian word for concentration camp)—a mysterious space, which everyone in the movie is talking about; however, it is never to be seen. This comes at no surprise, because the mysterious space/time is associated with the *chronotope of death.* Gradually and inevitably, the symbolic reality of the Zone unfolds within the reality of film. As a taboo, a prohibited space, the magic space of evil, it manifests, as well as foreshadows in the course of the story, the dangerous closeness of the characters to the space of real, not symbolic, death. The title, *Freeze-Die-Revive!,* is the name of an old children's game; it is rooted in old forms of incantation. In the film, the spell—magic formula of symbolic death and revival—represents a ritual model manifested in the cinematic structure.

Although the film's symbolic level represents the unified space of Stalinism, its syntagmatic level draws upon one boy's personal memories. The film story takes place in a little town on the Russian Far East. The war has just ended: the town residents, primarily women, the elderly and children, live in extreme poverty and hunger. But they manage; they even have their "life moments," their laughs and songs. There are no men around in this liminal space—no heroes, just the monsters or the "dismembered"—NKVD (secret police) agents, prisoners, war invalids, or criminals, who are to be found everywhere. The town has no distinct border with the concentration camp—something very unusual in the representations of German concentration camps in cinema. The town seems to have grown together with the Zone: it lives on it, works for its needs, camp officers come and go, prisoners are forced to work on the town's needs. And altogether, they work for the mine, railroad and the glorious Soviet industry. The space of the film geographically and symbolically signifies the space of hell—something behind the border between life and death. *Freeze-Die-Revive!* as a film-ritual reveals how by destroying this border, and emerging from the other realm, death becomes a part of life and the ruler of its every moment.[16] Nobody within the narrative space seems to notice the deformation of the sacred boundary between life and death. Although the impossibility of survival in such a space is emphasized by all of the cinematic devices of the script and cinematography, the film characters, especially the children, seem to be well adjusted to such 'alternative' conditions of life. The town people are shown as trying to live and survive at the gates of hell, while another part of the Collective Body—its half inside the camp walls, twenty million—is represented as the invisible part designated to die.

There is post-war poverty, cold, hunger, political terror, crime and violence, but the children are shown to have overcome the impossible conditions on the edge of life itself. The boy and the girl are two little tricksters selling hot water at the crowded town market on cold winter days. The market is shown as the place of dark carnival, where damaged deformed human bodies in order to survive are trying to sell each other damaged old goods. In the middle of this grotesque disfigurement, the ugliness of the market—dumpster, the children are enjoying life, playing, mocking and teasing each other. They both shout about "cockroaches in the pot" of the rival, playing pranks, scaring clients away from one another. Despite the competition, they remain best friends, helping each other in all ordeals, small and big. A series of episodes shows the world in which the children live and grow up. The boy buys his first skates with the money he earned at the market, but other boys rob him the very first time he tries them on ice. The girl, a street-smart keen little trickster, investigates the robbery, finds out where the thieves live and organizes the operation-revenge. The steeling of the skates back from the thieves' house results in a comic episode with the naked enemies—directly out of the bath—running around in panic; their chaotic motions add fun to the scene—one among many in *Die-*

*Freeze-Revive!* filled with pranks and humor. The film's comic side is not dark, it is a light, kind and warm humor. But laughter is unable to bring an emotional discharge within the film's tragic montage, as humor is always adjoined with the ruthless moments of terrifying violence and horror.

The boy's father is never mentioned; his identity is unknown. Valerka's very young, tired and beautiful mother, a war-time single parent, sleeps with a camp executioner. Her lover always carries secret documents with him. When he pulls his pants off for sex, the pictures of the dead and executions fall out of his pockets—what a phallic fertility symbol, a sacred moment of conception! One of the pictures shows the naked body of a teenage girl who had just been killed. This image of a ritual conception manifests a symbolic fruit of the intercourse of and relationship between the mother (Russia) and the murderer (Regime). Thus, the theme of fertility/conception interwoven with death, the ultimate fruitless darkness, is introduced into the plot.

The picture of the killed girl gets into Valerka and Galia's hands: they realize that in keeping it they may cause trouble, a real death, for their whole families. But looking at the black and white photo of the executed young body, the *shadow of death*, a signification of death, calling from the past and anticipating the future, they do not know yet how much it overshadows, symbolizes their own future and that of the Collective Body. Surrounded only by the manifestations of death, the children witness its various faces. They see how a released political prisoner, an old Jew from European Russia, a university professor, goes crazy outside the camp Zone. They watch from the ruins how a young female prisoner undresses, showing her body, terrifyingly ugly from torture and hunger. Naked and crying, she begs a male prisoner to impregnate her, as she believes that getting pregnant is her only chance to survive: a pregnant woman might be released. The Boy and the Girl witness more real life episodes, each of which may drive an adult crazy. But they only watch, they know that they live in hell, and their only aim is survival.

When Valerka—for a short cut—jumps into a train which goes into the camp gates, the driver discovers him and beats him nearly to death, with all the violent power of an adult crashing the body of a minor. The horrifying episode has its hidden meaning: the man can be thrown into camp himself if an illegal passenger is found on the train that goes from and into the Zone. Valerka plays a prank for revenge, leaving his slingshot in the train's path: the next thing he knows, the train is crashing into the field. The train accident is a huge political affair, and the investigators snoop around the town looking for a boy. They are everywhere, dressed in black; like the shades, they emerge from darkness suddenly directing lights into the faces of those whom they will to interrogate. The irrational cosmic fear, which the boy feels—without clear knowledge what exactly he is fearful of—triggers his run away, which becomes his ritual journey.

The film's reality is shown as a "valley of the shadow of death" where the two little tricksters gradually grow into Romeo and Juliet. The film is shot in black and white, stylized as an old documentary, with the sense of reality of unusual intensity, as if on a spiritual quest. The film's very style symbolizes a *vision*—the reality of dream, the boy's memory projected from the future. In these dreams the impossible interlaces with the real, becoming a revelation of the past, of its true meaning for one boy and the Collective Body. However, the cinematic energy of the movie comes from the two main characters, warm, live, and dynamic, and their incredible resistance, the survival instinct of the two young human beings. The film's pathos is in the manifestation of the "immortal love"—the children's powerful support of each other in the world where the adults not only do not care, but are as threatening and deadly dangerous as death itself.

The boy's own mother does not feed him, she does not care where he is or what he is doing. When she locks herself in the only room with her boyfriend, she does not worry that her son is hungry: she sends him away. It is characteristic that the mother—a symbol of the deformed Collective Body—instead of feeding her children, prefers to have intercourse with death. The episode when the mother does not let the boy home is symbolic. For the Mother of the movie's world, feeding the hungry son is less important than a date with the murderer, an executioner, a man involved in the camp killings. Thus, the Mother figure, the symbol of life of the Collective Body, is not a *nurturing* and *caring mother*. She is pairing with the *death figure,* thus choosing death over life, over her child—the Collective Body's future.

The main characters' romantic relationship—the sacred moment of first love—also ends in death. While traveling alone, Valerka and Galia seem to fool the criminals who are chasing them. But the same minute when the teenagers realize they are in love, the murderers suddenly hunt them down. The girl is killed; the boy is severely wounded. The words of love, to be pronounced for the first time in their lives, drown in the cries of dying. The line from an old song they sang, which helped the teenagers to recognize their feeling, sounds in the film like a spell, which should but never would create magic, never would generate a new love and a new life. There is no love, only death everywhere in the world depicted by *Freeze-Die-Revive!*, and death is seen especially in the ritual moments/Big Moments of life. As a legitimate third partner (party), death is present in any male/female relationship—in any sacred moment of ritual conception, not only desacralizing it, but moreover, ultimately transforming procreation into annihilation.

There are four couples in the film, involved in some kind of love/procreation relationship: they symbolically manifest the Collective Body's four ways of defeat. The four couples constitute a "square circle"—a solid model of the Collective Body in the condition in which it exists in the reality of film. The young heroes—Valerka and Galia—are not destined to know love and give birth to a new life. Valerka's mother and her boy friend—a camp executioner have a sexual alliance that is metaphorically associated with death. The third couple is Valerka's grandmother and her newlywed—a grotesque, comic and also mysterious pair of two ancient lovers. The elderly love birds are the only tender and caring couple among all of them, possibly a symbol of the true ancestors' way of love. At the same time, the two human shadows, with the look of death itself, are certainly incapable of procreating and continuing the Collective Body's immortal existence. And the fourth couple—the camp prisoners—absorbed by hunger and fear of death, can no longer relate to each other as men and women, even for the sake of life and freedom. The film's symbolic construction is completed as a whole; it presents a model of the Universe, where the Collective Body has no chance to survive.

The Collective Body represented by those murdered in Soviet concentrations camps is not shown. It is "structurally invisible," not as Turner's "*liminal personae*" designated for change, but as those designated to die, whose way out of the ritual death of state punishment is only through total physical destruction. However, the deformed and destroyed Collective Body is still shown through its parts in a series of tragic, Bakhtinian scenes. The agonizing "free" part of the Collective Body is represented in a series of shocking metaphorical episodes showing the rotting, dismembered or crazed Collective Body, sinking in its own excrement. These are powerful, striking and symbolic scenes based on grotesque bodily imagery: the weird dance of disabled war veterans, who have one feet; the yeast in the school toilet system causing faecès to rise and invade the school yard and nearby streets (schoolboys' prank against teachers and the regime); the Jewish professor, driven insane in the camp and let free—whom town residents suspect to be a "spy"—makes pancakes out of street dirt and then eats them, crying; and the film's tragic end—the horrifying witch-like dancing of the crazed naked mother over her little girl's killed body.

The film's language, seemingly simple, is constructed by a complex system of metaphors and metonymies, as dynamic ritual signifiers. *Freeze-Die-Revive!* is full of grotesque metaphorical imagery, such as, for example, an owl. The mysterious host arrives from nowhere in the middle of the night, persistently accompanying the boy on his escape route. As a shadow of death, owl appears immediately after the boy witnesses how the girl, camp escapee, is caught by the guards with dogs. The owl symbolically points to something that needs to be uncoded and understood: it stares at the boy as if communicating some secret message. His look is ominous, his message is mysterious—frightening and incomprehensible for the boy. The bird with the giant spread wings, perhaps a spirit of the dead—a powerful and ambiguous image—might be warning the run-away or afflicting his future. The film's play with both metaphorical and metonymical cinematic constructions is sophisticated and revealing.

Overloaded with verbal cliches, the film displays the coded dimension of ritual speech, constituted of or interlaced with quotations and slogans. System of secondary utterances, employed by the film, metaphorically points to the orchestrated social communication, lost freedom of speech and spiritual exhaustion of culture. On most occasions, characters express themselves through recognizable, clichéd lines, prison songs, official marches, proverbs, tales and urban folklore. Even the revelation of love the young heros experience through a quotation—line of a popular sentimental song. Deprived of personal independence by the political regime, the characters have no words of their own (almost an illustration of Bakhtin's language theory). A word said is a word used—it is an everyman's text, which nevertheless can paradoxically unfold its hidden sacred meaning if pronounced aloud in a special, ritual, Big Moment of life. The imposition of a verbal totality, a rigidly structured psychological reality in *Freeze-Die-Revive!* is played upon in an ironic rather than tragic manner. The secondary speech, employed in multiple ways, as a ritual spell (*zagovor*), a sacred instruction, and as a parody on ritualized Soviet culture, reinforces the film's quality as a symbolic *ritual tale*.[17]

The ritual modality of the film is played against a ceremonial plot—typical Soviet sentimental narration of an initiation story, with its obligatory small working-class town, exotic and cheerful street smart children a la *Les Miserables* (a favorite metaphor of Soviet official critique) and their ultimate victory over enemies and the difficulties of life. But there is no victory and no life in the reality unfolding in the revelations of the film-ritual. The children are not from a novel, but from real life, and in the life in hell is more 'exotic' than a human being can endure. It is their home town, their home country and home society that turns out to be a Forest, a labyrinth with no way out. Whatever path the young heroes may choose, they are destined to die. The characters' charm, resistance and liveliness, signifying their capability for the ritual rebirth, makes the tragedy only greater and the film's message stronger. The closest the film come to the concept of sacred knowledge was the manifestation of love. But it was delivered to the children by themselves—they represent both the givers and receivers, and they have no choice but to be in control of their own initiation, the rite of passage. Characteristically, there are no adults who can be initiating, sacred instructors in the realm of the film. All adults are either afflicted victims, or villains, "dissociative agents," in terms of the ritual paradigm. The leitmotif-revelation of the antitotalitarian cinema—"the monsters are us"—is once more passed on to the audience of *perestroika*'s ritual performance.

Valerka and Galia live in the space of death, inhabited either by the beasts and monsters, or by the ritually dead. Anybody human they know—all the adults without exception (parents, neighbors, prisoners, thieves, disabled veterans)—reside in the state of *human plasm* or *prima materia.* To come out of this state to rebirth and reintegration, one needs enormous power and a magic helper: both are unavailable to the children. Even their joint efforts (great friendship) are insufficient, and no magic helpers or sacred instructors are left in the world they live. Those who might have been *The Initiating,* messengers of sacred knowledge, have been the first to be entrapped in the liminal Zone of GULAG. Thus, the postmodern theme of labyrinth, dead end, which the ritual space has turned into, emerges in this seemingly realistic movie.

Drawing upon the explicit ritual formula declared in its title, Vitaly Kanevsky unfolds in *Freeze-Die-Revive!* a *ritual journey,* passage into adult life—the adventures of the two pre-teens—something that by all narrative laws should be an "initiation story."[18] Although the children are shown as extremely street smart and appear to be *already initiated* into a premature adulthood by the circumstances of life, the very meaning of symbolic death is challenged by the film. The journey ends tragically: the girl is killed and the boy is wounded by the knives of criminals. It might have been anything else in the film, murder or a tragic accident—death itself is on the loose in its cinematic space. The film reveals that the ritual death does not have its transformative substance near the Zone, which represents the actual space of dying and the metaspace of total death. Controversially posing at the beginning as an *initiation movie,* the film shows and gradually proves the impossibility of symbolic death-rebirth in the *Land of Forgotten Ancestors* within the conditions of Soviet totalitarian reality. There is no future for the children's first love and no hope for the Collective Body. There is no *fruitful darkness* any more; the transformative space of symbolic death mutates into total biological annihilation.

The initiation journey, the ritual-narrative paradigm in *Die-Freeze-Revive!* is opposed by the special historic circumstances—impossible to overcome even by the power of basic cultural mechanisms. The perfect initiation material, the two little heros of the movie are still unable to 'initiate themselves' in a situation of a total absence of donors, sacred instructors. As smart and strong as they are, these self-made little adults cannot get special powers—possible magic gifts are constantly slipping through their hands. They can overcome just about anything, but not everything: "uninitiated"—they are not protected and remain vulnerable to all the dangers of the world. The thrill and suspense of the film is in the worry of whether these wonderkids can make the negative space positive. Although they are shown to be incredibly strong, they cannot—death is shown to have inevitably reached them one way or another.

The film's aggression is expressed through its persistent and graphic representation of spiritual suffocation around the Zone of death. Its provocation manifests itself in the mysterious invisibility of the Zone, thus endowed with the magic quality of a giant, elusive and inescapable monster. Everyone is afflicted by it, even those who are unaware of the Zone, even innocent children, as well as generations of progeny (as shown in *Little Vera, Repentance* and *Scorpion's Gardens*). The visual absence of the

Zone only reinforces its metapresence in every unit of the narrative space/time, also esoterically mysteriously shadowing the dimension of the future. The dissociative agents of the "ritual space" make their work effective to the extreme—dissociation is inseparable from disintegration in the forms of real torture and "final" death. The film's atmosphere manifests *ritual fear*—that of dying and destruction—expressed by means of suspense—a subtle and sophisticated escalating cinematic tension. An unconscious anticipation of death, suspense is carried in the film in a most powerful, but indirect manner, hidden behind careless humor, in a documentary-style and as a representation of the "everyday." The film avoids tragic pathos; its dramatism is coded and concealed. But effectively supporting the mechanisms of narrativity, the film's suspense is also politically and ideologically judged. The ritual suspense reveals every person's unconscious but very real fears that people lived throughout Soviet history afraid to know about the twenty million dying in the GULAG—the zones of death.

The film is remarkable also as a border-mark of the GULAG's representation in Soviet cinema. The film miraculously remains within the border itself as an intermediate space between the legal—illegal, visible—invisible, the *invisible evidence.*[19] The Soviet concentration camps had been a taboo in literature and journalism until the Thaw. In the 1960s, the taboo was broken in written texts, thanks to Solzhenitsyn and other authors. However, the Zone still remained a taboo for visual representation in cinema. In the years of Stagnation, camp literature, for example, the camp memoirs of Nadezhda Mandelshtam, was prohibited again, displaced from official culture, although still widely available illegally (especially in the big cities, and in spite of the danger for a reader to lose his/her job and for a book lender to lose his/her freedom). But it was not until *Freeze-De-Revive!* that the Zone became part of a movie plot. Simultaneously, and after Kanevsky's film, dozens of other *glasnost* films appeared with the literal representation of the Zone in fiction and the documentary record in non-fiction cinema. However, they were not as powerful, because in *Freeze-De-Revive!* the Zone, GULAG was not actually shown, but functioned as an organizing complex metaphor, which determined the whole ritual-narrative structure and the imagery of the film. A taboo object, or a magic evil spirit that afflicts everybody in the present and the future, although invisible became the most striking artistic and ideological device of *Freeze-De-Revive!* The Zone ascended to the condensed archetypal metaphor of death, whose influence on life and the living—in a given culture—is explored and displayed by the film as a cultural text.

The transformative power of *Zone*—magical liminal space between life and death—is an ongoing ritual theme for Soviet cinema and was previously developed by Tarkovsky in his SF dystopias *Solaris* and *Stalker*.[20] The concentration camp in *Freeze-Die-Revive!* (in the manner typical for the "camp movies" of *glasnost*) is the one which turns the symbolic and ritual process against our expectations, and against the paradigms of culture, into pure annihilation. The magic space of Zone is identified in the film only as a space of death, with "no return." It does manifest the ritual chronotope, which however suddenly appears to be locked—in terms of time/space that nobody can leave, quite in accordance with the postmodern outlook and authentic historical practice of Soviet state. Those perceived to be imperfect for the Soviet life, therefore, had to be transformed, initiated, in this ideological space and could only be disintegrated completely in a physical and literal sense, to be later released only as purified bodiless souls, spirits, the dead. The striking radical metaphor of the Zone as the space of ritual death, the alleged "transformation" and particularly the tragic distinction between the two constitutes the film's philosophical enigma. There is no longer any place in that space of all-compassing real dying not only for love, conception, motherhood, but also for initiation and resurrection—the forms of symbolic death. The film's pathos is in the revelation that there is only one rite of passage left among the cultural set of rituals—the passage to death, to a physical one, not a symbolic one. There are no rootstocks for the ritual death-rebirth any more: the sources of life's self-restoration are exhausted in culture; no autocatalytic processes can be generated within a totalitarian society. What used to be a fruitful darkness for humankind—a space of ritual, a magic passage to transformation—is depicted and conceptualized by the film, as a fruitless darkness. The metameaning of the film is reinforced by the historical time of the story, always referred to in Soviet culture as an epoch of post-war spiritual revival. But the film shows that the historical chronotope is suppressed by the ideological one: never mind the victory over fascism, the dead ends of own history still dominated the social atmosphere. The film-ritual artistically elaborates the meaning of fruitful darkness and opposes it to the total and fruitless darkness of the mass purges. *Freeze-Die-Revive!* acts upon the cultural/ritual paradigm for its profound critique of totalitarian society.

It is highly characteristic for *Freeze-Die-Revive!*—as well as for the best films of a tragic genre, heirs of the ritual structure—that, reflecting on the most dark and hopeless events, by means of its immanent ritual structure, it produces and radiates an enormous emotional and spiritual force—catharsis. The revival has been shown to be impossible on the syntagmatic level, but paradoxically, the paradigmatic structure of the film manifests a symbolic death-rebirth on the full scale of the ritual action. Unable to revive generation of the totalitarian age, the film-ritual, by its autocatalytic energy, contributes to the transformative power of the post-Soviet era, giving more energy to these generations whose historical mission is to restore the vital living space for post-totalitarian society.

## Notes:

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[1] Turner, *Process, Performance and Pilgrimage: A Study in Comparative Symbology*, 142.

[2] It is understandable, considering the reaction of the mass audience that followed the release of the film: "For *Scarecrow* you should be put behind bars," wrote one viewer to Rolan Bykov, its director. Another group of viewers had similar reaction: "We saw *Scarecrow*... we got a headache... how could it have been released?" See more on the audience response, as well as another possible interpretation of this film, Alexander Gershkovich, "Scarecrow and Kindergarden: A Critical Analysis and Comparison" in *The Red Screen: Politics, Society, Art in Soviet Cinema.*

[3] Andropov was known as a powerful politician who sometimes helped controversial artists and scholars,

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for some paradoxical and unknown reasons—possibly to let off some steam inside the society and intellectual circles. For example, he helped the release of another prohibited movie, a social satire *Garage* (1980) by Eldar Riazanov. He also facilitated Bakhtin's return from exile to Moscow in the 1960s.

[4] See a chapter on *Scorpion's Gardens* further in the text.

[5] For the figure of *izgoi*, and the ritual of *izgoinichestvo,* in the context of the anthropology of Russian culture, see Yuri Lotman and Boris Uspensky, "Renouncer (*Izgoi)* and Renunciation (*Izgoinichestvo*) as Social-Psychological Status Position in Russian Culture Prior to Peter I," in *The Typology of Culture. Interaction of Cultures.* Works on Semantic Systems XV (Tartu, 1982).

[6] For moral-sociological critique of the film, see Lawton, *Kinoglasnost:* "She is unjustly accused of having betrayed the group, and after the period of ostracism and psychological abuse she is burned at the stake, in effigy. The metaphor of the burning dummy, with Lena watching it, is more eloquent of her suffering that any scene of explicit violence... In this teenage miscocosm one can observe familiar patterns of denunciation, purge, demagogy, lack of moral stamina, and loss of individual integrity typical of the behavior that—although most prominent in the Stalinist years—is not completely obsolete."

[7] The shocking effect of *Scarecrow* on the Soviet society of the 1980s can be compared with that of American films of "cruel realism" of the 1990s—*Kids* (1995, by Larry Clark, script by Harmony Korine) and *Gummo* (1997, by Harmony Korine), which depict the horrifying grotesque and yet recognizable world of the *kids*—"Our Children," the little monsters in American version. The striking parallels may be made between the ritual killings/fightings in all three movies, and also between hunting/killing the animals—stray dogs in *Scarecrow* and stray cats in *Gummo.* In both Soviet and American films, the motifs of vulnerability of the living creatures and cruelty to the animals symbolically and metaphorically reinforces the motif of children's cruelty to each other.

[8] Modern "voodoo rituals" strictly speaking, cannot be called rituals at all. Usually designed to attract a man or to destroy a rival, they can be defined as forms of the "artificial" impact on the Collective Body, not necessarily positive in terms of the natural course of events. They are intended to influence the distribution of roles within the Collective Body. Voodoo carries not the interest of the unity but that of one unsuccessful individual. As Grimes points, individual rituals are "a contradiction in terms"; the voodoo acts, therefore, should be defined not as ritual acts, but the acts of magic.

[9] Symbolic imagery of the film may be perceived in the context of Slavic mythology: in many areas, devils had the ritual names *malen'kie* (the little ones), *chertiki* (little devils), and later *gimnazisty* (students). For more on *malen'kie* in early Russian mythology, see O.A. Cherepanova, *Mify i legendy Russkogo Severa* (Hereafter: Myths and Legends of the Russian North) (St.-Petersburg, 1996), 170-71.

[10] The etymology of the Russian word *chuchelo* is important for the film's anthropological analysis. There is another word in Russian, *pugalo ogorodnoe,* of the same meaning—from Russian *pugat'* (to frighten), and *ogorod* (kitchen garden). The word *pugalo* has a connotation of fear, it has a literal meaning, rather

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than symbolic one of *chuchelo,* and lacks the latter's symbolic ambivalence. Interestingly, Bykov has chosen not *pugalo,* but *chuchelo*—its etymology is vague and deep rooted in ancient ritual language, and what is even more important, it has another meaning in Russian, that of the stuffed killed animal—something that directly refers to Ancient Slav's semiosphere of totemism. The killed animal/creature is also the worshipped one—this brings to the light from the depth of the "collective unconscious" the *Chuchelo's* powerful ritual context.

[11] For more on skin as a ritual meaning, see Propp, *Historical Roots of the Fairy Tale.*

[12] Leach brings to our attention, that in our horror at the accusation "you're a bitch"—but not, "you're a polar bear"—we provide further evidence to the notion that ambivalent entities (those who fall on the boundaries between categories or names and therefore have special connections with the fields of magic) have a potency which may be manipulated (and worshipped) as well as feared. Leach's theorizations are especially useful for the case study of such films as *Scarecrow* and *It.* For more on the aspects of ritual name-calling, see Edmund R. Leach, "Anthropological Aspects of Language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse" in *Reader in Comparative Religion.*

[13] The very action of representation obtains the meaning of the ritual magic. According to this logic, it is not up to the ordinary people, not appropriate for them to give/donate god a magic power of representation; they cannot add anything to his power. On the other hand, acquiring (perhaps against the "laws of nature" and religion) the same powers by the ordinary people by means of representation /idolization, contradicts the hierarchy between the people and gods. The controversy of representation as a power is vividly demonstrated in the contemporary (especially American) cult of the celebrities and movies stars (the ironic symbol of modern Olympus). The logic of (mass) representation results in the cultural phenomenon, in which the one portrayed is immediately signified with the magic power of a superior, heavenly creature.

[14] Grandfather was played by Yuri Nikulin, a World War II veteran, a famous Soviet clown and director of Moscow Circus—one of the most funny, as well as spiritual actors of Russian screen, a talented comedian in Chaplin's tragicomic tradition. It was a very well-cast movie. Kristina Orbakaite (a daughter of Russian rock-star Alla Pugacheva, was brought up by her grandparents, like her character—Lena), carried out one of the most powerful and cathartic performances of a child-actor in Soviet film history. She expressed the degree of sincerity, naiveté and pain that only a big tragic actress can.

[15] The opposition of narrative semantics "sacred parents vs. profane parents" belongs to Propp. He emphasized the fairy/wonder tale parents—the carriers of the profane (also: formal, explicit/surface/false) knowledge versus magic helpers (instructors/parents)—the carriers and givers of the sacred (hidden, implicit/profound/true) knowledge. See his *Historical Roots of the Wondertale.* In *Scarecrow,* these functions are reversed and distributed between the grandparent, the old warrior and the school administration.

[16] *Freeze-Die-Revive!* was recognized at several international film festivals, including Cannes. Other

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interpretation of the film, see, for example, Lawton, *Kinoglasnost,* 153: "Vitaly Kanevsky offers an unusual point of view of the GULAG... The two children live in a mining town inside the camp system, where the demarcation between prison and freedom is almost non-existent. Even outside the "zone" people live in barracks and are subjected to lawlessness and tyrannical rule... The subhuman life of the hellish town is a poorly disguised metaphor for the general living conditions in the country, and points to the fact that a whole generation has been deprived of its childhood."

[17] This "quotation quality" of the film connects it with the metatextuality of *The Viola Sonata, Scorpion's Gardens* and *Prison Romance*—films to be discussed further in the text. Katerina Clark focused her analysis of *Freeze-Die-Revive!* on the metalanguage of quotations, as cultural metacommentary. Although my analysis does not emphasize this aspect of the film, its significance in respect to the ritual speech is important to stress. See Katerina Clark, "Aural Hieroglyphics? Some Reflections on the Role of Sound in Recent Russian Films and Its Historical Context," in *Soviet Hieroglyphics,* 1-22.

[18] In various publications in English, the film's title is translated as *Freeze, Die, Resurrect*, (Lawton: 1993) or *Freeze, Die, Come to Life* (Clark: 1995). I strongly suggest that the title has to be dashed, as it is a formula (one word, a complete ritual utterance), and that the last word of the formula is translated as "revive" rather than "resurrect." My reasoning is exactly the same that Meletinsky used in his *Poetics of Myth,* 219: "resurrection" has a strong connotation with Christianity, and with the one-time sacred event, while "revival" refers to a larger spectrum of ritual semiosphere, and emphasizes the periodical aspect, the cycle Chronotope of the "eternal return."

[19] I rephrase here the "visual evidence"—a North American conference series on film documentary.

[20] See also, *Forbidden Zone,* by Nikolai Gubenko (1987).

# Chapter VI. Ritual Hero in the Cultural Space: *The Viola Sonata*

This chapter will discuss metatextuality as a re-creative mechanism, as a modality which manifests ritual mechanisms in complex discourses of predominantly written, as well as cinematic cultures. Ritual, which can be regarded as a text, functioned as a primary metatextual communication in archaic pre-literate cultures. In the cultural types where a ritual performance has been displaced by a text (written or cinematic) in its modern form, metatextuality has taken upon itself the cultural functions of ritual in a subtle but profound way. It can be referred to as an intrinsic ritual process coded within deep structures of modern culture. Metatextuality has a lot in common with ritual: it refers to the text as an artistic act profoundly connected with all previous and future texts-invariants constituted around the same paradigm. Just as the ritual is oriented towards the moment of creation, metatextuality is also semantically oriented towards the primary text—the archetypal source of all texts of the same narrative-dramatic sphere. Diverse ritual forms function in modern cultures in original or elaborated modalities, but they are all united by the same modelling function. Modern consciousness, with its focus on distinctions and classifications, will inevitably have difficulty accepting the idea of matrix identification in culture—something that is immediately manifest in the ritual structures. Metatextuality intermediates and bridges the opposition "distinction and identification": the evident multiplicity of texts, which are perceived as different texts, are re-united via metatextual mechanisms within culture's super-matrix semantic system. All the protagonists of the same plot, as distant as they are, paradoxically meet as one identity within the metatextual semiosis; and all plots of the same sphere originate from and refer to the same narrative-paradigm. Metatextuality makes these connections, transformations and identifications natural and conceivable for the modern mind, reviving within culture the paradigms of ritual action. Metatextuality can be referred to as a ritual process developed within the hypersemiotic cultural space, where in addition to the heroes-people, the meanings-initiands have to undergo necessary ritual transformations. Metatextuality also addresses urgent issues of national boundaries and separate identities of Collective Bodies, essential for the postcolonial cultural condition. As a form of resolution of controversial political dramas, metatextuality gives a simple answer to the question, how many Collective Bodies are out there in the cultural space? Each time a metatextual connection occurs—as an interaction of magnetic fields—the ultimate self-identification of one transcultural Collective Body takes place by building intercultural bridges. Establishing the possibility and channel for peaceful dialogue between conflicting cultures and their mutual reflection, metatextuality functions as a redressive action, a healing procedure of the multicultural reality. The communication of cultures and eras in time and space via metatextuality manifests the chronotope of Great Time and the interest of the macrocultural Collective Body in re-establishing itself as an ultimate unity. The connection between metatext and ritual, as well as the significance of both for modern (film) culture will be the focus of the following chapter. The films to be discussed, *The Viola Sonata, Scorpion's Gardens, Prison Romance* and *Andrei Roublev* represent diverse models of film-ritual, all of which attempt to bridge the gaps of cultural history by means of original ritual forms and sophisticated metatextual communication.

## *The Viola Sonata*

The section on The *Viola Sonata* focuses on the metaplot of the Artist as a ritual figure in Soviet culture in general, and in cinema particulary: Shostakovich's story. It is an introduction to the study of the metatextual space of culture and filmtext as a cultural text. The analysis of *The Viola Sonata* explores the controversial representations of the Collective Body in Soviet totalitarian culture, in the artistic world of Shostakovich and in the film about him. The paradoxical metapresence of the composer himself in *The Viola Sonata*—hero as an author—adds new dimensions to the discussion of the matrix identity of the initiating and the initiated. This section is also focused on the issue of *ritual silence,* which has become a mytheme in Soviet antitotalitarian culture, and which will be further explored in the study of Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev*.

***Visions* in Music and Cinema.** *The Viola Sonata* (*Altovaia sonata),* a film about Dmitrii Shostakovich, was made in 1980 but immediately prohibited, submerged into social nonexistence. Why did the Soviet regime consider a film with an innocent musical title so dangerous that it kept the film out of the cultural realm for six years until *glasnost* and *perestroika*? To answer this question we must analyze the film from historical, socio-anthropological and narratological perspectives, and also from the perspectives of the semiotics of propaganda and censorship. It is also important to explore the film's ritual, mythological and metatextual dimensions to determine its place in the semiosphere of Soviet and post-Soviet cultures. The analysis of *The Viola Sonata* consists of three parts: *plot*—an introduction to the film's problematic and history from the viewpoint of cultural anthropology; *climax*—a film text analysis from the perspectives of the semiotics of film and of culture; and *denouement*—an analysis of the film's ritual and metatextual structure, its cultural discourse, and its role in the development of antitotalitarian semantic counterstrategies. *The Viola Sonata* is a film-experiment; an *optative*—modelling artistic structure, the major idea of which is, by showing the inward world of the great composer, to reproduce his *visions,* his *imagined dialogue with history.* The film is also a form of ritual vision on the part of filmmakers, as they attempt to unfold and interprete the dreams of the *visionary*—the cultural hero and sacred instructor.

***Ritual Silence:* the Anthropology and History of the Plot.** The music of Shostakovich, through its organization of meanings, was a kind of transmission to the outside—a way out from within the Soviet system. The work of a real genius, his music created 'another' existence, thereby generating an alternative 'religion' and turning its creator, the artist, into another spiritual leader.[1] But dual leadership was intolerable for Soviet totalitarianism, which tended to replace the spheres of art and religion with ideology. Shostakovich's music nevertheless expressed the whole world and appealed to the whole world—to the Collective Body; his music is *universal*, and in this sense *total*. But this was a totality other than that of totalitarianism, for whose system of meanings it was incompatible and destructive.

The artist, as Victor Turner has argued, belongs to antistructure or liminality, and thus opposes social institutions.[2] This contradiction between art and power finds special expression in totalitarian societies. In belonging to the antistructure, the artist retains certain features of the outcast and submits to the laws according to which a society treats the outcast. Thus, discrimination against the artist in a totalitarian society is one of certain rituals that determine his place within the structure—antistructure relationship. From a socio-anthropological perspective, particularly Turner's theory, we are able to understand more deeply the ostracism of the artist within the Soviet totalitarian system. The ritual of civil 'execution' through repeated public censure and denigration, to which Shostakovich, Akhmatova and Zoshchenko—famous artists of their time—were subjected in 1947, demonstrates the structure's struggle against art, which was a manifestation of the *communitas* or antistructure sphere. The tendency of artists not to have any well-defined status within the social hierarchy of the totalitarian regime was interpreted, according to the logic of the system, as a threat to the system, and was transformed into the status of outcast. The artist who chose not to surrender to the laws of the social system was predetermined to have descended into a state of *human plasm*, or *prima materia,* in terms of Turner's ritual theory.

The totalitarian system, as a collective consciousness, created its own anonymous mythology, which was put forward as having been created by reality itself. Thus, the *death of the author* (supposedly symbolic but more often physical), was a kind of necessary condition to the determination of his status as outcast, his place outside the system. The totalitarian regime, according to these laws, produced for and practiced on its artists (and the intelligentsia) many different kinds of "civil death."[3] A certain aspect of the fate of those belonging to the antistructure (artists, wanderers, holy fools) was a predestination for pain, and they acknowledged their acceptance of suffering and social silence as a conscious choice.[4] However, their response to social ostracism was not a loss of words; it was a vow of silence. Silence, as well as the invisibility, nakedness and other features of social alienation were, according to Turner, other modes of the ritual death—of initiation. It manifest a paradigm of rite of passage, which submerges a human being into the state of liminality. "Liminality is conceived of as a season of silent, secret growth," Turner wrote, "a mediatory movement between what was and what will be where social process goes inward and underground for a time that is not profane time."[5] Thus, silence indicates the unvoiced word—a transmission on another level and with another object of communication—the *'beyond'*. Silence in this context is another modality of magic and a channel for communication with superior powers. Consequently, the "beyond"—a sphere of archetypes and eternal spiritual values—communicates with the living through silence; silence appeals to the sphere of the beyond. ***Social silence*** was therefore a ***sacred silence,*** which meant more than words. Consider some of the properties of liminality and the status system, which Turner pairs as binary oppositions:

Absence of rank / distinctions of rank
Humility / just pride of position
Acceptance of pain and suffering / avoidance of pain and suffering
Silence / speech
Sacredness / secularity
Sacred instruction / technical knowledge[6]

Hence, social silence tends to transform itself into sacredness, and this kind of silence is not an absence of meaning: rather it obtains the quality of a sacred instruction. The whole world of music, with its non-verbality, may be viewed as a kind of social silence and sacral instruction: its meaning cannot be directly translated or interpreted literally, but only intuited. Music, through its social silence and through its communication with the spiritual 'beyond', immanently possesses the quality of sacredness. Ascending to the syncretism of ritual, where art, religion and philosophy exist in an indissoluble unity, music as an art form 'sanctions' itself in totalitarian society as an 'alternative religion'; hence the great composer's sacral exhortation in the form of silence. Consequently, the task of the filmmakers was to unfold the sacred silence Shostakovich's expressed both in his social vow of silence and in his music; to read its hidden codes. Overcoming the sacral silence of the past, of mythological heroes of antitotalitarian culture, as a semantic black hole or cultural pause may be considered an historic-semantic assignment, a revelation, without which a culture cannot develop.

Shostakovich's *social silence* was expressed in the total absence of verbal documentation of his spiritual life (diaries, memoirs);[7] in his lack of public speaking, especially on ideological themes; and in the prohibition of a large number of his musical texts and in the nonverbality of his creative works (even those allowed). Shostakovich's social-civil silence inspired Solomon Volkov's *Memoirs of Dmitrii Shostakovich,* but this attempt to overcome the composer's silence came more in the form of substitution than authentic material.[8] The contradictory story of the composer's interviews with Volkov, which some specialists believe were falsified, while others regard them as authentic, was determined by the conscious mutedness of Shostakovich's *social voice.* His choice of a civil vow of silence, from within the historical reality in which he was forced to live, generated a lot of questions as well as the desire 'to model' his voice. However, unlike Volkov's book, which pretends to be an 'actual' but in fact is a 'fictional' model, a false "vision" (however authentic), *The Viola Sonata* is an openly fictional cinematic representation of Shostakovich's inner world, which ultimately achieves the status of an *actual model,* or a "true vision"—a revelation.

The film directors attempted to overcome Shostakovich's silence by reading the hidden codes of his texts and interpreting the sacral meaning of his silence.[9] The film tends to express the pithiness and significance of the artist's unvoiced word. The unknown image of Shostakovich—with regard to his views on Soviet history, as represented in the film—was not only incompatible with official propaganda but also could potentially have created an ideological explosion in the sphere of Soviet sacred meanings. Both the film and the composer's creative works possess an enormously destructive energy directed against totalitarian consciousness, and for this reason were considered extremely dangerous to the regime.

*The Viola Sonata* was the only collaboration on the part of the two renowned directors: Semen Aranovich and Aleksandr Sokurov.[10] Both destroy the boundaries between the language of fictional and nonfictional cinema; their films are full of creative fantasy and advanced ideas. At the same time, both were considered 'unreliable', even dangerous in terms of the official ideology. Censors had prohibited a number of thier films because of their politically incorrect content, unconventional forms and subversive symbolic codes. However, the authorities could not continue to prevent them from working because of their widespread reputation as extremely talented artists.

Both directors have already made films focused on the sphere of ritual silence: Aranovich did it in his film *Gorky: the Last Years* (*Gorkii: poslednie gody,* 1968), about Gorky's forced and tragic silence, and Sokurov did it in his films, *The Lonely Voice of a Man* (*Odinokii golos cheloveka,* 1979) based on Platonov's story and *Save and Protect* (*Spasi i sokhrani,* 1989) based on Flauber's *Madam Bovary.*[11] Aranovich's film about Gorky was made on the wave of the Thaw, prohibited that same year, and shelved for twenty years. The central idea in this film was the demythologization of Gorky's image as a loyal citizen of a key ideologue of the regime. Using new documents, Aranovich intended to destroy the ceremony of praising the "great proletarian writer" as a "founding father of Soviet literature." On the contrary, he revealed Gorky as a tragic historical figure, a deeply unhappy prisoner of Stalin forced into a social and political silence during last years of his life. This film and *The Viola Sonata* are united by the same fate: after a period of civil silence, they were returned to the sphere of culture simultaneously in 1986; the former released after twenty years, the latter after six years of 'nonexistence'.

Normally, when a film was prohibited by Soviet authorities, all copies of it had to be collected and handed over to the censors, who might complete destroy it, along with any other of the artist's works that could be found on state territory, as they were considered "goverment property." Unwilling to accept the total loss of their work, the directors illegally saved their 'working copies' and showed films to professionals in the 1980s in spite of the knowledge that demonstrating them might result in a confrontation with the KGB. In this way the films' ideas and original artistic devices penetrated the sphere of culture, as had in the 1960s-70s, in a similar manner, Tarkovsky's outstanding film *Andrei Rublev*, also devoted to the issue of the great artist's ritual *vow of silence* and *his imagined dialogue with history* through his art.[12] Neither filmtext existed officially, but having been screened illegally for 'closed audiences', they both had tremendous influence on the political and artistic minds of many people. It was painful for the authors to watch their ideas and devices spread throughout the film world, quickly picked up by colleagues whose films were legally and widely shown, while the original films were kept behind the curtain of official recognition and, as it was thought, outside the realm of culture.

*The Viola Sonata* had already been released when the editorial board of *Iskusstvo Kino*, the leading theoretical and politically most progressive Soviet film journal, decided in 1987 to publish a lengthy and detailed article on the artistic structure and cultural significance of the two dissident films: *Gorky: The Last Years* and *The Viola Sonata*, on the basis of their political and artistic value. I was chosen as author of this manuscript.

However, publication of the article, which had in fact already been signed for publication by the chief editor, was cancelled at the last moment for unknown reasons. *The Viola Sonata* touched upon the taboo sphere of the subconscious and exposed our history and ourselves in a way that had never been done before. That our history was horrible and tragic had already been recognized in dissident literature and widely accepted within youth and intelligentsia circles. However, the progressive collective consciousness, even that of the intelligentsia, maintained an explicit distinction between the notion of fascism—which always symbolized something antihuman and incomprehensible, something absolutely evil in the semantic system of Soviet propaganda—and the notion of totalitarianism, which was perceived as a so-called 'necessary evil', yet one that was 'ours', both habitual and comprehensible, and therefore 'less dangerous'. The distinction was necessary because it maintained the opposition between the major poles of subsonsciousness—'I' and 'anti-I.'

The key point in the film's history, of course, was that it had attempted to destroy this distinction, and to bring the identification "*monsters are us,*" as early as 1980, when the totalitarian regime was still strong.[13] Moreover, it did so by presenting Soviet history, the life of the Collective Body, through the eyes of Shostakovich—the established "peoples artist," the fighter against fascism, the man of genius recognized throughout the world. Zamiatin's and Orwell's motif of the collective "We" as the ideologically twisted and deformed the *Body of Masses,* that became the greatest evil on earth, both for us and for others, determined the ideas and structure of the film, which was supported by the all-powerful logic of Shostakovich's great music. By reconsidering the meanings of Historical Truth and the Soviet People, of Fate and Time (all of which manifest focal points within the semantic sphere of the Collective Body), the film presents, particularly for 1980, totally new notions of those concepts that played an essential role in the semiosphere of Soviet propaganda.

**Cultural Hero and the Collective Body.** Shostakovich was a kind of moral tuning-fork for his time, a ritual tuner of the Collective Body, in terms of this study. Shostakovich bore harmony in his soul as a spiritual criterion. He was extremely sensitive to any falsity, to deviations from the ideals of human nature and social co-existance. The directors manage to show not only the socio-historical roots of Shostakovich's music but also its immanent axiology and semantics—the indissolubility of the moral and artistic harmony in his creations. They show in the film that the composer simply could not ignore moral deviation was unable to adjust to the deceitful voices of his time, to accept them as a norm.[14] And all distorted intonations of the age—the false pathos, vanity, self-interest, hatred—all the false voices of his social reality shocked the keen ear of the composer, thus generating image-prototypes for his musical dissonances. Images of Soviet propaganda in the embedded clips of newsreels are shown as ideologemes, shapes of the distorted consciousness, simulacra, which determined the composer's aesthetic response and the very choice of his artistic devices. Having been surrounded by a chorus of social voices singing out of tune, he had to find them appropriate *names* in the semantic sphere of his music; to signify them in terms of musical harmony. Thus, the composer expressed his attitude toward truth and lies in the figurative language of music. Having exaggerated the sound features of contemporary social life by furiously and vividly incorporating the grotesque, he made moral dissonances 'visible', or, more exactly, hearable, by mirroring the true, ugly face of reality.

The sphere of allusions in the semiosphere of music is difficult to define.[15] However, the film makes it possible to hypothesize that Shostakovich responded to the distorted image of reality that prevailed in Soviet propaganda with his musical texts. His system of dissonances served as a signifier to ideological distortion—to its falseness and lies, and to the life of simulacra (in Baudrillard's terms), generated by propaganda in mass consciousness. Thus, Shostakovich, in his search for historical Truth, expressed in his music the great tragedy of illusions. One of the tasks that Shostakovich's music as a semantic system had to carry out was to overcome the power of simulacra, to win over the hydra-headed *dragon of propaganda* that spread discordant intonations and metastases of lies all over the social reality.[16] As Anna Akhmatova witnessed in her poetry the active modality of Shostakovich's music: "It alone speaks with me, when others are afraid to speak."[17] This manifests a paradox of his ritual language: silent in social communication within offcial culture, he communicated 'silently', without words through the invisible realm of sacred communication, at a time when people were frightened to share their deepest feelings and thoughts. Shostakovich was among the few unafraid. He created his own codes, or philosophical-figurative language, to express his true feelings on contemporary social life. His creation of new musical structures had great cultural significance in the development of musical art and artistic consciousness in this century. However, besides its universal meaning, his music also held the meaning of a secret language existing within the given political reality, comprehensible to the 'initiated' in a situation of total socio-semantic restriction. Shostakovich lived his life within a veritable "Kingdom of Distorting Mirrors," a realm in which semantic spaces were curved.[18] His new musical aesthetics reflected these semantic loops, and the transformation of reality into a simulacrum becomes a metaplot of Shostakovich's creative work. The plot of *The Viola Sonata* may be defined as the great composer's struggle through music for true reality, with the aggressiveness of the political lies that had penetrated social life.

**The Collective Body and History.** Two shots, consistently repeated throughout the entire film as refrains, symbolize Soviet History and the fate of its People. The first shot is of a group of men pushing heavy wooden millstones that are moving in a circle. The second shows people attempting to stay on a large circular platform that is twisting and revolving at break-neck speed. This is a kind of sideshow, but most of the people fail, ultimately, and fall. It was one of the first postmodern symbolic images in the history of Soviet cinema to interpret the people's history as a vicious circle, lacking development;

it was a conception which opposed the Soviet logic of history to the logic of Great Time. It was also a symbol of ritual circle, deprived of transformation and catharsis, while official propaganda tirelessly repeated that the people were marching toward a *radiant future.*[19] The directors embodied the Moebius strip principle, or Esherian space, in both the film's sphere of meanings and its structure. The film demonstrated the splitting and displacement of meanings into their opposite: the transformation of good into evil, and vice versa, in Soviet history.

By embedding official archive newsreels—with their stable system of picture-signs—into the polyphonic system of Shostakovich's music, the directors make it possible for viewers to follow their logic, which was daringly precocious considering the regime of 1980. There is the logic of *differance,* of sarcastic and tragic games with the slogans of visual propaganda, and, contrarily, semiotic play with the naive people who believed in the totality of the Soviet semiosphere and the happy communist future. The film also manifested the logic of cultural critique, exposuring "misfit rituals" (in terms of Grimes' ritual criticism) of Soviet totalitrain culture, and the state ceremonies masking as the transformative rituals of 'the people.'

The grotesque and the cacophony of the NEP period, shown in the light of the silent cinema, are transformed by the film's controversial symbolic montage, into a bright major key, reflecting "the high spirit of the first constructions" as they appeared in newsreels.[20] "The common feeling of enthusiasm toward labor" is transformed into the machinery of the *White Parades,* with foreboding shades of 1937 (the 'White Parades' is the name given here to the Soviet mass political marches and the shows of athletes and workers, all in white uniforms, staged on Red Square in honor of Soviet power—typical ceremonies masking as rituals). The pathos of the coming social harmony, of universality, overflows with the joy of existence and the youthful energy of the new world in the film's historical 'documentary'. However, the film makers turn this into an ominous puppetshow, into a strained, unfathomably concealed excitement that bespeaks the suppression of individualism by the collective, exposing how the ritual was transformed into a giant ceremony which was intended to pose as all-people's ritual. The sharp paradoxical montage, which reveals the tragic dialectics and ambivalence of Soviet history, is put together by the film directors on the basis of Soviet official newsreels and the music of Shostakovich, which makes 'organic' the contradictory transmutation of meanings. Two opposing meanings—the sincerity of pathos and the bitterness of sarcasm—displace one another unceasingly over the course of the film on the levels of montage and music. The intrinsic logic of the grotesque in Shostakovich's musical 'illustrations', together with the well-known Soviet newsreels, naturally transform 'social passion' into a sardonic laughter. As is typical for metatextual structure, Shostakovich's musical 'commentaries' function as external signifiers, projecting their undermining meanings onto the various patterns of official cinematic propaganda.[21] The filmmakers turned the usual perception of historical images on its head in the way they felt Shostakovich would have responded to the demagogy of propaganda if, in the 1930s, he had still had the freedom to say what he thought. The episodes of the *White Parades*, filled with sacrasm and horror, are combined with Shostakovich's *Seventh Symphony.* Traditionally interpreted as an image of German fascism, this music obtained in the directors' paradoxical montage a meaning of totalitarianism that reveals the concept of fascism within it. Thus, the cinematic meaning of the newsreels transforms into what seems to be its opposite, but which ultimately turns out to be the revelation of its true identity.

Suddenly the theme of the war intrudes into the narrative. The film again displays the transformation of meanings on a figurative level, expressed by the paradoxical conjunction of plastic symbols, involving the semantics of ritual. The black and white graphics of the parade episodes plays upon the symbolic cinematic imagery of the shadow. People are shown as *white shadows* moving against a *dark background* in the episodes of *The White Parades*; these scenes are contrasted with the following videochronicle of the Leningrad blockade, where human *black shadows,* exhausted and almost bodiless from hunger, are slowly moving against the background of *white snow*. The philosophy behind the film, its process of resignification, is expressed in both episodes through 'graphicity'—the polisemantic metaphorism of the shadow and the cinematic play with archetypal image-meanings. The striking contrast of the conflicting dimensions is what unites the symbolism of these shots. However, the semantic and moral vector, as the film shows, is vividly shifted: the poles of the *good* and the *bad*, the *black* and the *white*, the *signifier* and the *signified*, change places. Paradigmatic structure (plot) invades the syntagmatic (story). This becomes a characteristic feature of *The Viola Sonata* as a metatext and an example of conceptual art. Through the montage of these episodes the directors create a purely cinematographic image, expressing a profound idea about the dialectics of good and bad in the spiritual history of the Soviet people. The music of Shostakovich, as commentary, plays an ultimate role in the film's reconceptualization of the Soviet sphere of meanings.

The volunteers of the Leningrad Blockade—workers, girls, teenagers—represent war episodes of the film's historical narrative and another mode of the film's representation of the Collective Body. The awkward, thick-set figures march in their worn, heavy jackets and oversized shoes. With the same common expression on their faces, they are passing us by slow-motion. They move with efforts, as if almost frozen in historical vacuum. These figures paradoxically radiate both—the exhaustion and strength: these people are as though made of cast-iron. But now they are different *People*—not screws, as the music comments, not marionettes any more: it is as if some great ancient Scythian power—a ritual, ancestors' power—has freed itself and begun slowly awakening the people.[22] In these shots, the image of the people is interpreted not as a unified unthinking social mass, but as the spirit facing the enemy. The sluggish, inert social mass that allowed itself to be turned into spiritual slavery is, paradoxically, the same rebellious people that would not tolerate the slavery of German fascism.

Another vivid example of the film's symbolic montage is the episode involving Shostakovich's civil execution—the sacrificial ritual, which took place simultaneously with the initiated by Zhdanov a civil execution of Akhmatova and Zoshchenko in 1947.[23] The film's directors—the new generation—expose this episode with a scrupulous lack of mercy. Although this kind of historical truth was normally concealed by still living and influential participants in the events, the authors of *The Viola Sonata* made no effort to hide their intention to reveal the shameful truth; their desire to know *who was who* in Soviet history. Who among the well-known artists threw his stone at the great composer.

Suddenly the motif *exposure of exposers,* fairly prevalent and straightforward throughout the period of glasnost, obtains a new twist. The damning, accusatory speeches of contemporaries against Shostakovich are paradoxically combined in the film with shots of women and teenagers rebuilding ruined houses after the war—shots full of sympathy and pity, a metaphoric reference to the Collective Body. This is a cinematographic device called 'phi-effect', in which visual picture and sound image belong to different events, different spheres of space, narrative and meaning within one—yet to be defined semantic unity; this type of montage may be assocated with the ritual choronotope. Moreover, this montage causes here two extreme and opposite feelings simultaneously—anger or indignation, and compassion. Because pronouncing the names aloud, or combining harsh historical truth with the sacred image of the people, was scarcely conventional within the totalitarian semiosphere, the montage generated a powerful and ambivalent emotional reaction. 'Phi-effect' (which can be interpreted as the perspective of Great Time) in *The Viola Sonata* results in a new historical signification, a new moral and semantic paradox—the drama of the people's self-identification. With this montage the film asks "Who were we in our history... those who built, or those who destroyed our spiritual life and our common future?"

The conception of Fate is presented in the film through a number of dramatic collisions, where peripetias of the composer's personal fate (the chronotope of the personal time) are untied, not within the frames of a story, but by the denouement of his music (which expresses the chronotope of Great Time).[24] The polyphony of *The Viola Sonata* as a ritual peformance provides an organic integral whole of the two dimensions of time. The film structure is reminiscent of a spiral, in that its action develops both horizontally and vertically. The horizontal development consists of sections of time—different periods of Soviet history. The viewers of the film become eyewitnesses to Shostakovich's interaction and dialogue with every episode of history through the polyphonic dramaturgy of his music. The film demonstrates how time put pressure on the composer at each turn of the historical spiral, and how Shostakovich responded to it with his music. Reality is reflected as sounding in the spiritual world of the artist. And he responds to it through his imaginary language, influencing social reality by transforming it. This is a dialogue that pulsates energetically in each microepisode of the film's artistic fabric. On the basis of a single human life story, the directors of *The Viola Sonata* allow us to understand, both on a grand historical scale, and on an emphatically personal level, the processes of interreflection and interaction between the Artist and History, between Great Time and Personal Time.

Every episode of the history contains events of Shostakovich's private life. The vertical action of the film is expressed through a biographical line. It exposes the irreversible course of time from the birth of the hero to his end. In presenting the biography of the composer, *The Viola Sonata* has an ascending intonation, tending, by its architectonics, toward the structure of the fugue, emphasizing and sacralizing the moments of rites of passage: *Birth — Reaching Manhood — Love — War — Betrayal — Success — Death of a Hero.* The biographical narrative is built in dramatic cycles of hope, success and defeat, metaphorical representations of symbolic rebirth and death. In every historical period and in every cycle of the hero's life there is a tragic contrast—the painful point of fate—its deadlock:

The joy of Shostakovich's childhood, but also the death of his father;
his successful work in cinema, but also his nervous disease;
the successful beginning of his career, but also his defeat in the international piano competition in Poland;
the highlights of his mature period's creative work, but also his operatic and balletic flops;
his marriage, and then the Second World War;
victory in the war, but then accusations of formalism and social ostracism;
the jubilee, but also the death of his wife;
world recognition, preparation for the concert in Paris, but then weakness, sudden disease and death.

A characteristic and important feature of *The Viola Sonata* as a postnarrative, or antinarrative, is that all the tragic episodes of the protagonist's personal life do not have their denouement in the story, but receive a cathartic discharge in the music at the paradigmatic level of the film narrative. When Shostakovich could find no way out, he still worked; and the creating of music was his response to the dramatic peripetias of his own fate. This was one of the ways in which the directors raise the biographical film to a philosophical level; to a level of high tragedy. Shostakovich imprinted upon his age his fate and creations. He survived, and towers above Time, having reflected a multifaceted image of history and the tragic pathos of the twentieth century in his immortal music. *The Lonely Voice of a Man,* that of Shostakovich, expressed only through nonverbal art forms, turned out to be so strong as to be heard the world over.[25]

The image of the protagonist outgrows the structure of the film's story and, transformed, acquires a symbolic ambivalent meaning. Shostakovich is shown simultaneously as a 'Man of Genius' (a 'meaning-in-itself', explaining the logic of the story only by unique qualities of the protagonist, and 'closed' for viewers' emotional identification) and as 'Any Man' ('Every Man'—an 'open meaning' which is able to provide the necessary basis for viewers' emotional identification). The edifice of identification, which is absolutely necessary for the functioning of the text as a tragedy, is structured to show that Shostakovich traveled the same trial road as all those living in the same age and place. We see the protagonist's pain, losses and human suffering, understanding how his individual fate was typical for this stormy and contradictory century. Although *the initiated* by the sacred sphere of music, he, who have already obtained sacred knowledge, had to go through the symbolic death—the initiation by history—again and again.

The motif of the hero's human openness and vulnerability, a metaphor of eternal childhood—the symbolic birth and ritual beginning, achieves in the film the status of a leitmotif. This motif stresses that the trials of initiation are yet to come, they are inevitable, inescapable, thus manifesting the circle of ritual time. In various and often hopeless situations, a photo of Shostakovich as a little boy with his head on his mother's knees can be seen. The unusual and strange twist of the child's neck becomes the metaphorical foreshadowing of his tragic fate, revealing both the power and vulnerability of a great talent. *The Viola Sonata* may be viewed as a philosophical reflection on the dialectics of the Big and Personal Time: the limitations of a human life, and on the limited opportunities available to one individual (even a man of genius) in opposing the circumstances of his time. The film depicts how reality suppresses, subdues and enslaves a man, absorbs his individuality, and thus turns him into a mere historical cog. At the same time, the film shows the desperate fight of a man for his dignity and his own spiritual place in the world. Thus, the concept of 'Genius' against the background of totalitarianism is shown in the film as ambivalent: Shostakovich is depicted as a Genius, Demiurge, Creator, but at the same time as Any Man, a mere "grain of history." The artist and the hero, he is simultaneously insifde and outside the ritual time: the initiated and the initiating, the afflicted and the ultimate healer.

The multidimensional conceptions of time—Great Time—and of the *symbolic death-rebirth,* represented by the figurative structure of the film, are both its philosophical and artistic invention. The episode of Shostakovich's death is built as a symbolic image on three simultaneously presented documentary elements: a photo of the composer's grave with his monument; Shostakovich's phone conversation with Oistrakh on how in the future to perform some important pieces of his music; and the continuing blips of the telephone. All the components of this cinematic episode are concrete: a photo, a phone ring-off sound, and the audio recording of Shostakovich's voice on the phone, which had been made by Oistrakh in order to immortalize the voice of the genius. The 'trick' of the directors' editing is in their combination in one shot: together, the three documentary cinematic elements compose a poetic metaphoric image. At the same time, the *grave,* the power and mystery of death, the *miraculous voices:* the sacred communication on the issue of "ritual magic," and the mysterious rhythmical sound—the pulse of ritual energy, they all represent three powerful ritual symbols. In this episode, past, present and future are united as an integral whole, drawn together in taut, spring-like tension. The composer's life and death, what he had accomplished and what was still continuing—movement and immobility deprived of their borders—are paradoxically concentrated in one cinematic image. The episode shows images of *concrete time* and *past time* through the phone conversation between the two great musicians. It shows *eternal time* and *arrested time* through the event of sudden death and a picture of the composer's grave. And it shows *time torn* and *time directed backwards* by the sound of a fallen receiver and the long 'blips' of a ring-off. The lively agitated speech of the musicians, the stony silence of the monument, and the irrevocable, nervous sounds of the ring-off—as though calling after the living Shostakovich—are three incompatible realities integrated into a powerful paradoxical image.

The fixed, motionless time of the gravestone is conjugate with the time of creative aspiration, charged with the flight toward the future. The passionate discussion of the two masters about how *in the future* one would play a part of Shostakovich's symphony—a dialogue full of hope and yearning for tomorrow—develops through the same time dimension as when this communication has already come to an end. We can hear the ring-off of this conversation. Thus, the future, which potentially and emotionally takes place in this unit of time, occurs simultaneously with the present. And the past, which is the past for us—the viewers, but the future for the characters, is in the present of their communication, but already in its own dimension within the structure of the image. The active present vividly and sensually transforms before our eyes into the stony past. The present is still active, but 'unaware' that it is already dead and turning into 'the past'. The picture of the gravestone symbolizes the *eternal past* of the composer's life. At the same time, it represents the 'future' with regard to the time of the conversation—when the composer was still alive. However, shown from the very beginning of the episode, the time of the gravestone becomes the initial, primary time. There is no time development in the photo; its time is *frozen,* therefore, it gradually moves from the epicenter of the viewer's attention. But unlike the photo, the dialogue is developing, and the sound image of the discussion (the actual past) is converted into the future, leaving behind the visual, still actual future that recedes into the past. Hence, the image of time, which includes both vectors of life and death, is presented as an eternal mutually reversible circle, revealing mythological dimensions.

The obvious silence and motionlessness of the gravestone—the symbolic death—is exploded by the enormous energy of life pulsating in the voices of the two artists—the symbolic rebirth. Therefore, the very meanings of end, limit and death are called into question in the philosophical *writing* of the film authors. The time of narration and the time of the narrative are paradoxically linked and conjugated in a metaphorical unity. The different dimensions of time display the relativity and weakness of all human categories of logic when they are opposed by the powers of the spirit and art. The cinematographic image of *reversed time* expresses the late but grateful response of the progeny. The death of Shostakovich was not the end of his spirit, for it won out over the limits of Time and is the symbol of time being overcome. This is manifested in the film through its metaphorical language. Sound-visual metaphor expresses the suddenness of the abrupt end, the irrevocability of loss, and at the same time the idea of immortality, the human spirit's overcoming the limits of a physical life. Time is shifted in the film, and our perception of it is displaced from its conventional axis. Layers of time are paradoxically stratified upon one another and hidden within one another. The end of human life is interpreted here as an incomprehensible inconsistency, an incongruity taking place in the universe. The episode presents the paradoxical image of death, which is simultaneously vanquished. Death appears as something impossible, unrealizable, nevertheless ...there it is. At the same time, this artistic image is like an unfurled spiral, an explosion of time, transforming *never* into *forever*.

This episode is a development of the cinematographic 'phi-effect'. However, in this case, the sound image—having its own time dimension, which is different from that of the visual image—represents that same fraction of reality in fractions that follow, and symbolizes the very time of life continuing out beyond its limits. Two parts of the narrative connected by the story become connected semantically. The paradoxical union of different fractions of reality, always generated by the 'phi-effect' in this film, is filled with deep philosophical thought on the dimensions of what we call 'a human life'. The polyphonic image of Time, symbolizing its overcoming in human dimensions, becomes a kind of artistic conclusion to the film. The final image of the composer's death, as presented in the film, generates the simultaneous conjunction of incompatible realities, revealing through this 'play with meanings' the existence of different spheres and qualities of Great Time.[26]

The life and power of the artist's spirit also become central to the episode. Its subject is the *signifiance* proper—the very act of signification, the ritual action, the montage. The cinematic utterance communicates through the episode as a self-organizing process of the creative mind; we 'hear' its 'monologue' by following the film's logic. The artistic 'will' manifested in the device is a creative force of the mind that is able to develop itself and change reality. The course of artistic thought, the logic of re-conceptualization and the very process of structuring the artistic image, and, hence, the social meaning, becomes the acting *dramatis personae* of the performance. In other words, artistic thougfht here fulfills the function of protagonist in the plot of the metanarrative (as is typical for postnarrative structures—for instance, conceptual art or metatexts).

The conception of Time, represented by the film, is a manifestation of the polyphonic artistic structure, which Bakhtin developed in the sphere of cultural theory, and which Shostakovich developed in the sphere of music.[27] "The turn to polyphony in our day can only be welcomed because its opportunities are practically boundless," wrote Shostakovich. "Polyphony is capable of expressing everything: the scope of time, of thought, of a dream, and of creation."[28] A polyphonic or multidimensional conception of time-space contradicts common sense. It represents another reality of time, in which every unit, every moment, belongs not to human beings, with their understanding of a linear and developing time and a specific point of focalization, but to "multiprospectible space," in which time does not move, but abides in an immobile eternity where 'superior creatures' can shape and model time as clay. Thus, the cinematic imagery of *The Viola Sonata* reflects the Great Time and the chronotope of the Collective Body. The manifestation of the polyphonic time-space brings a mythological dimension into the film and leads to our understanding *The Viola Sonata* as a metatext unfolding as a mythological structure.

*Hero as Author, Author as Hero*

**Cultural Theory: Film as Metatext and Myth.** The ideological conception of Time encoded in Soviet newsreels reflects the mythological time of totalitarianism—a linear evolution from the *dark past* to the *radiant future*. The polyphonic conception of multidimensional reversible time, Great Time, expressed by both film montage and Shostakovich's music. It represents a worldview that accords with the Einsteinian model. It is notable that the totalitarian conception of time is opposed in the film not by a linear, monodimensional, antitotalitarian conception à la Solzhenitsyn. *The Viola Sonata* destroys the naïve and false logic of linear progress in a socialist society from the bad to the good—communism, and places the totalitarian visual text-code into a multidimensional time-space continuum. The patterns of a Newtonian-type totalitarian logic are appointed to the artistic space of Shostakovich's metatextual and polyphonic Einsteinian-type model. Thus, the directors—in creating a cinematic artistic structure, shown in the images of history and the Soviet people, particularly in the episode of the composer's civil execution—tend, as did the great composer, to express in their film an ambivalent, polysemantic model.

A metatext (or polyphonic structure of the Bakhtinian type, which uses utterance-codes instead of text-codes) relates to an ordinary monosemantic text in the same way that Einsteinian physics relates to Newtonian physics. Metatext makes it possible to expose the relativity of meanings inadequately represented in various embedded text-codes, and thus to reveal the curvatures of a semantic time-space continuum. Metatext focuses on the interrelation and interaction of the text-codes of various types of culture and consciousness. This interaction becomes a plot or a story, because plot—a paradigmatic structure—becomes syntagmatic in metatextual structures. The episodes of the composer's biography gradually unfold over the course of the plot, but there are also meanings—moving, conflicting and developing—that are expressed through the figurative language of the film. Structurally, the film's *imagery* grows through *documentary,* the *existential* through the *every-day,* the *philosophical* through the *concrete,* the *defamiliarized* through the *well known* moments of history. Thus, the cinematic language proper—the formation of phenotext from the body of genotext, the dramatic conjunctions and transformations of semantic units and categories—becomes a plot of the narrative, its paradigmatic level, which plays a most essential role in the *avant-scene of performance.*

This does not mean that the film destroys the boundaries between different categories. On the contrary, it reconsiders those boundaries and restructures them. The transformation of the very nature of the textual boundaries becomes, as will be shown below, a structural plot of the film-experiment. The most important feature of the metatext is the *differential codification* of various parts of the text. The transition to a system of internal structural boundaries constitutes the basis for the generation of meaning. In the metatext, the role of the text's boundaries—both the external boundaries separating the text from the nontext and the internal ones demarcating different levels of codification—is highlighted. The boundaries are mobile; shifts in the text's orientation toward one or another code result in changes in the boundaries' structures in general.[29] In the case of *The Viola Sonata,* the inner boundaries are turned inside out, as in the Moebius strip: the internal space (that of the text) becomes the external space (that of the culture), and the external becomes the internal. The boundaries that formed the semantic space of Shostakovich's music do not disappear in the film space, but are turned and projected as a social event extrapolated into the cultural space surrounding the film.

*The Viola Sonata* shows that the dismantling of the dominant semantic system, the totalitarian system, had already begun from within the depths of the ideological system. Shostakovich began the semantic restructuring (perestroika) of the totalitarian cultural space in the sphere of music. The creative work of such geniuses as Shostakovich is usually generated by the death of one cultural epoch and the birth of another. A new phase of culture is conditioned not only by the destruction of the existing semantic field but also by constructive trends. As the author of a new language, Shostakovich created a new semantic field within the deep structure of the dominant semantic system, using material from both the living and dead linguistic elements of his epoch (its text-codes), testing their actuality and vitality in new combinations. To accomplish this, artistic consciousness must reach a certain level of self-reflexivity and must comprehend the very processes of textual structuring and discourse formation.

The film directors' 'professional cooperation' with both the *co-composer* of their film and its protagonist was made possible by an insightful reading of Shostakovich's poetics and his hidden codes, as well as by their own similar creative methods, particularly the embedding of fractions of other obsolete text-codes within the structure of their own text, which is just in the process of being created. Aranovich and Sokurov, both in previous individual experiments and in their collaborative work on *The Viola Sonata,* were dissatisfied with the use of archive film documentary as a 'thing-in-itself', a flat, trivial, static mold of time, devoid of artistic interpretation. The inertia of simply following material or, contrarily, violating film structure with vulgar ideological schematization, was equally unacceptable to both directors. They were united by an unconventional approach to alien documentary material. Their aim was to split it, break it up, find out what is inside; to discover the nucleus of image and sound as though it were an unknown object. Thus, they place the documentary into a new and revealing perspective and, within a new context, defamiliarize it with paradoxical semantic conjunctions. They often use sound-visual counterpoint, combining materials that belonged, it seemed, to nonconcurrent facets of reality. The film directors divest old documentary shots and make them act in a new way. They make static material dynamic and return sound and voice to the silent substance of history. Or, contrarily, by muffling or deadening the fuzzy and incidental noises of archive newsreels and putting historical documentary into slow motion, they uncover meanings concealed in the silence of the tragic past, its *unarticulated word*, its unresolved questions. And this is neither artistic violence nor the deformation of material and its historical truth but, rather, the organic germination of a new image-meaning within a documentary form. The artist, in creating a metatext, destructures the hypotexts in order to restructure them on a new artistic and semantic level, forming an advanced imaginary reality. In *The Viola Sonata* the devices of montage in the film became *social action*—manifestations of a dissident, antitotalitarian *resignification* of conventional meanings. The 'post-structuralist philosophical and semantic revolution,' which can be considered a development of the Bakhtinian philosophy of culture and consciousness, faced vivid and dangerous opponents embodied in the ideology and censorship, within the Soviet system. In the totalitarian semiosphere, support, or not, the absolutization of meanings meant political life-or-death. *Theological scepticism* in the interpretation of meanings represented an ideological and political struggle in which artists, if they wanted to stay honest with themselves, became involved.

Interestingly, *The Viola Sonata,* like the music of Shostakovich itself, is more paradoxical, more *polyphonic* and polysemantic, than some texts produced later in the glasnost period, when the ideological vector had turned, but interpretations of meanings remained as 'monologic' as before. The very aesthetics of Shostakovich—his type of artistic consciousness—was greatly influenced by his contacts with theoreticians of the Formalist school, with Meyerkhol'd, and later with Bakhtin's ideas through the outstanding musicologist, his close friend Sollertinskii.[30] This is not as strange as it may seem, because new artistic structures are generated by both changes of time and developments in thought, as the metatext is both a work of art, and at the same time, a manifestation of theoretical thought.

Shostakovich's music and *The Viola Sonata* can be defined, in Derridanian terms, as *writing*—the creation of a new reality of meanings and a new model of consciousness based on the transformation of meanings and understanding of their ambivalent nature. The writing theme develops in the film into a creative plot, which appears to be able to transform the reality of meanings and, through this, social reality itself. The introduction to the plot of writing in the film occurs in the episode where the composer provides accompaniment for silent movies. Here, the writing of both the directors and Shostakovich is revealed. The directors of *The Viola Sonata* present their own version of the origins of Shostakovich's metatextuality in their modeling the composer's *writing on the margins* of the silent filmtexts. In the early years of his professional career, Shostakovich had to earn money as a pianist in the cinemas. Aranovich and Sokurov combine his *First Concerto* with fragments of the early silent films in order to refract and interpret the reflective world of screen through the composer's improvisations—meaning, how images generate images, how filmtexts are undertaken for reinterpretation in the metatexts of music. This prelude to the theme of writing, may be interpreted in the context of the film structure as the directors' encoding or *semantic tuning,* a 'test of method' in the creation of a new film language.

Hence, the filmmakers interpret the silent cinema as a *hypotext*, and the music of Shostakovich, which was coming into being during his practice as an accompanist, as a *hypertext.* Interestingly, these texts come to life before our eyes for a second time; the past and the present conjugate once again in the film structure. At the same time, *The Viola Sonata* is itself a hypertext in relation to the musical texts of Shostakovich, which it embeds as a hypotext into its own textual body. Thus the boundaries between hypotext and hypertext become paradoxical. On the levels of structure and language *The Viola Sonata* tends to explore and display artistically the metatextual relationship between Shostakovich's music and the silent cinema, and between the film text itself coming into being and the composer's music, which the film authors use both as an object of narrative and as a model of narrative method. Thus, the structure 'text-within-text-within text', which can be the property of both conceptual art and metatext, is a characteristic feature of the film. Due to the metatextual nature of Shostakovich's embedded discourse, however, the film transmutes into a multidimensional structure—a 'metatext-within-a metatext'.

*The Viola Sonata* marks the movement in Soviet culture from biographical narrative to *antinarrative metatextuality.* The film retains some external features of a traditional biographical film-narrative on the surface level: it is meant to display the 'life facts' of a hero as they were seen by Soviet ideology, and to follow a genre of banal biographical narrative in a Socialist Realist manner. The events of the composer's life comprise the obvious, external strings of the film story, the syntagmatic level of the narrative. But on the level of deep structure *The Viola Sonata* reevaluates the very genre of historical documentary film and provides an example of post- or even *antinarrativity.* Narrativity had long been a sacred cow in the Soviet system of meanings, representing the regime's sacral values. Having escaped to freedom from an "aesthetic GULAG" (Mikhail Epstein's term)—as had, for example, Tengiz Abuladze in *Repentance,* the first film of *perestroika*, or, even having not yet escaped, as in the case of *The Viola Sonata* in 1980—the first thing that artists started to do was dismember the hated sacred body of the "hallowed animal." The newly regained freedom of montage and metatextuality were among the methods used for this purpose. Thus, the very substance of narrativity (the body of myth, which represented the mythological body of the regime proper), having been guarded so long by ideology and therefore having shared with the regime a part of its historical guilt, became one of the most desirable objects of ritual sacrifice, which artistic consciousness practiced as part of its antitotalitarian aesthetics.

But why was narrativity semantically linked with the Soviet ideological system, which it had served faithfully for so many years? To answer this question, it is helpful to recall that Turner emphasized the reverse connection—the narrative nature of ideological systems.[31] Further clarification of this unification can be found in the tendency of narrativity to explain, by its very structure, the structure of a given social order. The logic of events is an invisible narrative deity, that very *deus ex machina* which sometimes shows its face only in the end by untying the dramatic knots of the plot. The logic of the plot, formed by the whole structure of the narrative, maintains itself as a divine logic; it tends to transmute into myth. In antitotalitarian consciousness, narrativity became firmly associated with the mechanism of brainwashing, with the aggressiveness of ideology in creating mythological stories that were ordered to serve as models for everyone's life. People were not able to create their own future, or be authors of their own fortune; they could not live their own lives. It was preordained that everyone move only within the narrow corridors allotted by destiny and thus submit to a certain number of ideological narratives. Narratives, therefore, as patterns of state mythology, were among simulacra which fed on human lives, devouring existential space itself. Throughout the history of Socialist Realism, biography, as the simplest genre of narrativity, served as a favorite model of the ritual myth-shaping text. The fates of "dead heroes" were made to play a key role in the "political education of young generation." Whatever his initial circumstances, the hero of a narrative—following the logic of the plot that represented a superior "divine" mind—naturally and organically came to serve "Communist ideals."[32] And this was a narrative metaplot for all Soviet art—a myth-shaping modeling mechanism of ideology.

*The Viola Sonata*'s image of Shostakovich departed from this hallowed mythological context. Opposition between the Man and his Age was one new type of ideological conflict developed in the film. However, this is not the only parameter of conflict. Other types of antagonists face and oppose one another on the level of the film's plot—on the paradigmatic level of the narrative, which is infused with high dramatic tension. An additional pair of antagonists confront one another in the narrative with the traditional hatred of ideological enemies; these antagonists are the texts. In order to overcome the walls of the state mythological corridors—the boundaries of conventional biographical narrative—the directors use the mechanism of intertextuality as a structure capable of modeling a multidimensional semantic space.[33]

The process of intertextuality is closely connected with the process of identification; both are mutually determined and expressed. *The Viola Sonata* is structured also as a drama of identities: "Who am I?" asks the lonely voice of the multifaceted protagonist, whose multidimensional identity constantly changes its shape, involving in the structure of the metaplot ever newer characters from the intertextual and cultural spaces. The postnarrative structure usually demands a multileveled structure of identification, which is connected with the film's multiprospectible structure of focalization.[34] One can see that identification forms a complicated matrix structure, and that the mirrored figures of the protagonist are multiplied and hidden within each other, thus enveloping the wholeness of the cultural space and anticipating a formation of myth through the substance of metatextuality. Multiplying in the intertextual space, the figure of the protagonist radiates waves of meanings. This creates a vibration of the multidimensional semantic universe, calling into question the stability of the whole multitude of interconnected meanings. Identification takes place in the film structure, however, not as a simple act of combining/multiplying the congruous, but as a paradoxical conjugation of the impossible, of incompatible identities, which is formed by overcoming the conflict of meanings in a process of reidentification. The latter functions as a *trace*, *signifiance*—as a semantic and a *paranarrative* action: the clearing-up of identity, but also of opposition, creates a syntagmatic level that is both interlaced into the paradigmatic and determined by it.

In order to understand the process of intertextuality and the structure of the relationship of texts within the metatext, it is necessary to clarify the very concept of metatextuality. The concept of a text-code is based on Bakhtin's definition of the text as "a monad reflecting within itself all the texts of a given sphere of meanings."[35] The Bakhtinian notion of heteroglossia may also be defined as the "drama of texts" in metatextuality, as a highly dramatic semantic tension within intertextual space. The texts' dramas—their lives, mutual activity and struggle, expressed in the counterpoint of heterogeneous codes—represent different languages and types of consciousness, thus forming the very structure of conceptual art where texts function as *dramatis personae*. Over the course of the film, it is the inward semiotic conflict within the visual historical documentary that unfolds gradually under the influence of the montage and music. The film makers expose and intensify the inward semiotic conflict which functions as a generator of new meaning and becomes a 'story' of the film's metanarrative. Thus, artistic and semantic vibration constitute a process for generating and developing meaning within the film structure. Just as the intertextual structure can be considered a dialogue, *The Viola Sonata* can be considered a vehement discussion, a semantic battle between totalitarian text-codes (newsreels) and antitotalitarian consciousness (music). The introduction of Shostakovich's untranslatable semantic model excites the "mother" text—the text-code of official propaganda. Attention shifts from the message to the language as such and therefore to the consciousness that generated its own codes. Under the intensive pressure of the alien semiosis, the various subtexts that constitute the mother text begin to produce new information by differentiating and transforming themselves according to new, alien laws. Removed from semiotic equilibrium, a text becomes capable of self-development within a new metatextual structure.[36] As a result of the semantic battle, texts eventually organize themselves hierarchically. The semantic and axiologic significance of metatextual processes in cultural space is in the structuring of various interpretations of certain values and meanings into a new hierarchy, which represents the next stage in cultural self-comprehension and potentially forms a new integrated system of symbols and meanings. Metatextuality actualizes the historical moment of the death of ideologies and creates on its ruins a new type of semiosphere. Therefore, the film's own paradigmatic level is split; the plot is multiple. Besides being a personal life drama, the film contains the drama (transformation) of history, identities, and texts, or, intertextuality as drama. Thus the following pairs of antagonists shape the structure of the conflict on a paradigmatic level:

we — they (heroes vs. monsters)
man — history (the man vs. his age, personal time vs. Great Time),
Shostakovich's music (as a text-code) — propaganda (as a text-code)
ritual vs. ceremony

The embedded texts in *The Viola Sonata* have multiple functions: as a text-code, a monad/matrix of its semiosphere; as a generating structure determining the very process of the hypertext formation; and as a component of a conflict, constituting the active dialogic structure of the whole. Texts within the metatextual structure can simultaneously generalize, generate and oppose one another. Consequently, the syntagmatic level in this structure lacks its own development and tends to discharge its dramatic tension onto the paradigmatic level, ceaselessly interweaving and splitting with the latter over the entire course of the narrative. However, the complexity of the structure does not disintegrate as a result of the plurality of the texts' functions; their activity is regulated by a process of semantic polarization. This is the counterpoint, penetrating the whole textual organization, that constitutes the film's 'load-bearing construction' and the pulse of its vitality. Two types of texts that express two antagonistic types of consciousness are grouped around the two poles of dramatic conflict. The antagonists are two text-codes: Soviet newsreels and Shostakovich's music, which group around themselves all other texts, facing and reflecting one another as mirrored surfaces, revealing historical reality itself in differing and incompatible models. False images or simulacra, generated by the distorting surface of propaganda, occasion the sarcastic laughter and dissonance not only in Shostakovich's music but also through the directors' montage. However, the film's conflict and its *differance* of meanings *overcome the text's boundaries,* generating from within the film's own history the same conflict involving the political antagonism between Art and Power.

The film exposes biographical interpretation against the background of history—the pattern traditionally used by Soviet propaganda to stage its stable and 'final' meanings. But under the pressure of the authors' radical 'theological skepticism', the semantic space in the filmtext vibrates and tends to split, communicating by allusion a dissident game with semantic ambivalence. This comprises the language of *film writing.* The *differance,* manifested in the figurative language of both Shostakovich and the filmmakers, conditions the 'secret code' of *The Viola Sonata,* which served not only as a secret communication of the 'initiated' (the opponents of the regime) but also as a 'secret weapon', a tool for destroying the totalitarian system of monologic meanings.

It is important to underline the myth-recoding, myth-restructuring function of metatextuality. The sphere of metatextuality establishes a 'frozen', eternal time. With the use of a multitude of cultural-intertextual identities, it returns the protagonist from actual time—the time of social/syntagmatic action (story time)—to *mythological immobility,* a paradigmatic time of metamyth. The endlessness and timelessness of interacting and interfering mythological structures condition the cultural birth of metatexts. A metatext, by its immanent quality of intertextuality, occasions the reproduction of a mythological system of meanings. Mythology also has much in common with ideology. The moments of crisis of particular ideologies—their birth, death or transformation—must result in the widespread appearance of metatexts. A metatextuality in which embedded text-codes may be considered fragments of ruined myths is a process of collecting those fragments and, thus, demonstrating culture's self-regenerating functions.

Both metatexts—Shostakovich's music and the film—performed a dangerous function by suggesting the death of the totalitarian system at a time when the regime's leaders felt it to be still strong and vibrant. The premature crossing of boundaries, the opening of the forbidden storage area that keeps the myth's secret code—a violation of the system's *sacred silence*—plunges the new heroes of the cultural myth into a new phase of sacred silence, a new chain of self-generating ideological conflicts. The fate of the protagonist in *The Viola Sonata* is both reflected in and repeated by the fate of the filmtext. The symbolic image of the protagonist vibrates and bifurcates, projecting itself onto new characters in the film story as a text 'within the culture.' The sphere of conflict *inside* the filmtext shows itself to be the same conflict *outside* the film's frames: the artist's social ostracism. Shostakovich, as a 'narrator' and coauthor of *The Viola Sonata,* repeats his own fate as a hero in the narrative. The sharp and uncompromising nature of this conflict, as well as the system of meanings within the text, cause the external conflict between the filmtext and Soviet censorship, the guardian of the totalitarian system of meanings. At the same time, the irreconcilability of the conflict, as it is displayed, resulted in the ostracism of the film authors as well. Shostakovich's ritual *silence* was reflected and reinforced by the silence of the shelved film, which was in turn augmented by the silence on film—prohibition of the review. Violation of the sacred silence created a chain of *voiceless authors*—the mythological mutedness of artists, and was ensured by mutual contract between the regime and its culture. Thus, *silence* generating *silence* becomes a mythological string of the film's internal and external metaplot. And we see how the internal plot (the story within the film text) and the external plot (the story of the film text) intersect in the semiosphere of culture. Shostakovich, being both the film's protagonist and author, becomes a participant in both plots. The film's dual plot comprises the story of the muted artist ascending to the myth of the cultural hero's silence, and also the endless reproduction of his story in historical space, thus revealing the very formative mechanisms of cultural mythology. As a metastory, *The Viola Sonata* turns into a kind of myth, producing the image of frozen mythological time—that of totalitarianism, where those to be initiated (the artists) can only follow the path of suffering already traversed by a mythological hero. The Eternal Past endlessly projects itself onto the Present; the original ideological situation produces reasons (in terms of Althusser) for the reproduction of the same conflict again and again.

Culture is itself realized through mythological structures. The image of history as an antagonist oppressing the protagonist's lonely figure with all its evil power turns *The Viola Sonata* into a cultural myth of the totalitarian period, and the image of Shostakovich into the symbol of a cultural hero. Directed against the Soviet myth and participating in its deconstruction, the film creates a new myth—that of posttotalitarian culture; a myth about the heroes and prisoners of a defeated deity, the regime.[37] Shostakovich, as a symbolic cultural hero (reflected in both the film's story and history), is doomed to follow his fate endlessly, repeatedly reproducing the mythological plot. A structuring core of the metanarrative manifests itself both inside and outside the realm of art: the space of a text outgrowing its own frames becomes a *cultural space.* The double, mutual projection of the film's conflict—the political story of the film's prohibition, as well as the fate of both text and hero—bears out the film's plot as a myth in the semiosphere of culture. *The Viola Sonata,* a cultural phenomenon existing both within and outside its textual borders, is transformed from a cinematic to a *cultural text*—a mythological structure.

Metatextuality tends to be constituted not just as a dialog on any possible topic involving various text-codes, but as a discussion of the pivotal point of this culture: its inarticulated problem, an unconscious trauma, the skeleton in the closet of a given society, its *major myth*. The very formation of metatextual stratification is conditioned by a given culture's need for a cathartic discharge, by the inarticulateness and surcharge of its deeper unconscious levels. The metatextual process can, therefore, be considered a ritualistic action of cultural self-reorganization performed through artistic activity. However, not only does the *hero* become the *author* of *The Viola Sonata*, but in the film's ritual-mythological structure the *authors* become the *protagonist* of the metatext. The directors' own intention to make a film about the great composer's struggle with the regime can be considered both a political and ritualistic action. The directors (both of whom, it bears remembering, had a long history of prohibited, shelved and cut films), having themselves suffered so much, appealed for support to a powerful ancestor—to the spirit of cultural hero. The directors entered the magic circle of ritual structure, where the cultural hero's story was again performed. By identifying themselves with someone who won out over the regime in the past (at least spiritually), they reinforced and asserted their own powers in the endless fight with the system. By reproducing in the film the "social drama" (in Turner's terms—a conflict that has not yet been exhausted) they influenced, through the mechanism of ritual structure and the repeated, spinning plot lines of defeat and victory, not only their own fortune, but that of generations to come. Metatext possesses a prognosicatory quality, a protostructural modality of divination. It is a generator of further texts and of future meanings;[38] a kind of self-testing, self-generating structure of new artistic language and, potentially, social thought. The filmtext is thus suffused with the semantic and ideological problems that remain for posttotalitarian mass-consciousness to solve. The directors of *The Viola Sonata* looked for a cinematic form consonant with the "magical" shapes and rhythms of Shostakovich's music, its revelations and its semantic and spiritual organization. They invented a cinematic form capable of expressing the polyphonic vision of the great composer, a type of artistic action adequate for his sacred instruction. Aranovich and Sokurov created a ritual performance, "Theatre of Shostakovich's Images"—their own cinematographic model of the great composer's *sacred wisdom*.

## Notes:

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An earlier version of this section, article "Shostakovich on Screen: Film as Metatext and Myth," is published in *The Russian Review* 56 (July 1997): 402-24. It is devoted *to the memory of Dmitrii Shostakovich, Semen Aranovich and silent artists of Russian culture*. Semen Aranovich, a former military pilot, filmmaker of elder generation (died in 1996) first came to fame for his highly artistic and bold documentaries, which often exposed ideological myths of Stalinism. Although many of his films were prohibited, by the 1980s Aranovich was already an established director of both fiction and non-fiction films. His honest films on ideologically correct topics—World War II and a fight against crime—passed censorship and acquired recognition. Alexandr Sokurov, now one of the leaders of Russian cinema and a renowned heir of Tarkovsky, was in the 1980s a beginner, who, however, had already become famous as a unique talent and a dissident mind, and was strictly prohibited from work in state studios. When Aranovich insisted that Sokurov work with him on *The Viola Sonata* as a co-director, it was an act of courage and support on the part of the fathers' generation of the Thaw, giving a hand to the young in the difficult political time of Stagnation. *The Viola Sonata* is a result of the two directors' political antitotalitarian and artistic collaboration.

[1] More on the issue of marginal cults and alternative religions, see I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*.

[2] See Turner, *The Ritual Process*.

[3] From *'prorabotki'* or denunciations in newspapers and at meetings (as in the case of Pil'niak), house imprisonment (Gorky), exile (Bakhtin), arranged persecution campaigns (Pasternak), prohibition of texts (Bulgakov), and outright ignoring the artist to the point of oblivion (Tsvetaeva, Platonov), to imprisonment (Solshenitzyn, Siniavsky, Brodsky) and physical death in a camp or prison (Mandelshtam, Meierkhol'd, Kharms, Filonov).

[4] The concept of social silence is used in this paper as a symbolic category of polysemantic nature. As a type of ritual symbol, a *non-finito* in the language of social behavior, *social silence* has many dimensions, but generally refers to any demonstrative action refusing social communications. *Social silence* may be passive or active—imposed or self-imposed. In this respect, any conscious separation from the social system, like King Lear's abdication or Tolstoy's abandoning his ordered life in Iasnaya Polyana may be also discussed in terms of *social silence*. This symbolic category has not received the attention it deserves

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in the areas of sociocultural anthropology and semiotics, except in the important works by Bakhtin and Turner. On the sacred silence of the Russian holy fool as a form of ritual behaviour, see my "Towards the Anthropology of *Yurodivost*." See also G. Brelet, "Music and Silence" in *Reflections on Art*, Susanne K. Langer (Oxford: 1961), G. Agamben, *Language and Death* (Minneapolis, 1991), Paul Colilli, "The Semiosphere of Silence" in his *Signs of the Hermetic Imagination*, Toronto Semiotic Circle, Monograph Series of the USC, No.12 (Totonto, 1993), Angelo Caranfa, *Proust: the Creative Silence* (London, 1990), and Mikhail Yampolsky, "Death in Cinema" in *Re-Entering the Sign*.

[5] Turner, "Comments and Conclusions" in *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversions in Art and Society*, ed. Barbara A. Babcock (Ithaca, 1975), 279.

[6] Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 106. It is important to focus attention on the logical connections of the categories (as a Derridanian 'trace', or transmission of meaning—its organic transformation) within Turner's vertical row, which order I changed to make more clear the mutual dependence and transformation of one semantic opposition to another.

[7] After writing this chapter I had the opportunity to read *Pis'ma k drugu: pis'ma Shostakovicha k I.D.Glikmanu (Letters to a Friend: Shostakovich's Letters to I.D. Glikman)*, (Moscow, 1993). The book provides more evidence of Shostakovich's spiritual life. About his attitude toward the Soviet regime and totalitarian propaganda, see, for example, 141, 220-21, 322-23.

[8] Dmitrii Dmitrievich Shostakovich, *Testimony: the Memoirs of Dmitrii Shostakovich*, Solomon Volkov, trans. Antonina W. Bouis (New York, 1979).

[9] In this context, "theatre of silence" should be mentioned, as an ongoing trend in twentieth-century performing arts. Originated in Chekov's dramatic style, and experiments of symbolist theatre, it should be more accurately called "The Theatre of the Unspoken," in Cuddon's terms. As a drama theory, it was devised by Jean-Jacques Bernard in the 1920. In his view dialogue was not sufficient; important was what characters *could* not and *did* not say. See Cuddon, *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 966.

[10] The script was written by Vladimir Dobrodeiev with the participation of Menashir Iakubov, the film's musical consultant, Shostakovich's pupil, and the keeper of his archive.

[11] More on Sokurov's cinematography, the alternatives to postmodern style and on *Save and Protect*,(1989) in particular, see my "Poetics of Tomorrow?" in *Iskusstvo Kino* August (8 1990).

[12] As had in the 1960s-70s, in a similar manner, Tarkovsky's outstanding film about the great Russian painter, *Andrei Rublev*, also devoted to the issue of the artist's *vow of silence* and *his imagined dialogue with history* though his art.

[13] Interestingly, how this corresponds with recently published observations by Andrei Tarkovsky's reflections on *The Viola Sonata*: "I saw it in a 'draft montage' version as he [Sokurov] asked me to come [from Moscow to Leningrad] with the purpose to see it... There are moving, astonishing pieces. It is a montage type of cinema, and this film had no chance to pass censorship... There is such a shot, one of the

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photos of Stalin in the film. The stare in his eyes explains everything without commentaries! One can learn a million anecdotes about Stalin, witnesses' stories, Solzhenitsyn's books—but nothing can be compared with this one shot, of 4.5 meters length... An ability to tear out such a picture says a lot about [the directors'] human dignity... When I saw this stare for the first time, I shuddered... It is scary to look at him from the 1980s, from the montage room, thirty years after his death!.." In the same 1982 interview Tarkovsky said about Sokurov: "He is a genius, he has already a place in the history of cinema. What a level!!!... Sokurov has wearied things, incomprehensible, even silly, somewhat unclear, incoherent... But he is a genius, he has a hand of genius..." See Olga Surkova, "Gleb Panfilov—Andrei Tarkovsky: The Italian Dialogue, 1982" *Iskusstvo kino* 11 (November 1995) 198, 201.

[14] There were situations in Shostakovich's life that could be considered deviations from his world view, such as his acceptance of texts with propagandist elements for his cycle *Jewish Folk Songs* and *The Song of the Forest*. However these facts do not contradict the conception of *The Viola Sonata* regarding the 'inner dialogue of Shostakovich with history.'

[15] See, for example, see: Menashir Iakubov, "Musorgsky's *Rayok*, Shostakovich's *Anti-formalist Rayok* and the Traditions of Russian Musical Satire from Alexander II to Brezhnev." (Paper delivered at the conference 'Shostakovich: The Man and His Age', University of Michigan, 29 January 1994).

[16] The metaphor of the totalitarian regime as a dragon belongs to Evgeny Shvartz, Soviet antitotalitarian dramatist, and author of the grotesque fairy tale dramas *The Dragon, The Shadow,* etc. Shvartz's plays-parables were full of hidden anti-Stalinist political satire. Although *The Dragon* was almost prohibited by censorship, and not allowed for scenic performance for a long time in the Soviet Union, the metaphor was extremely popular among Soviet educated readers. The first cinematic version of the play, *To Kill the Dragon,* was made only in the years of perestroika,

[17] *"Ona odna so mnoiu govorit, kogda drugie govorit' boiatsia ..."*.

[18] *The Kingdom of Distorting Mirrors* is the title of a popular fairy tale written by Vitalii Gubarev in the post-Stalinist period. It was written for children, but is full of allusions for adults.

[19] On the reconceptualization of Russian history in the cinema of *glasnost,* according to postmodern formula, see my "Find the Magic Word."

[20] NEP is a common abbreviation for the "New Economic Politics" (1923-28)-a period of private enterprise, allowed by Lenin after the revolution and soon banned by Stalin. It is well-known for the rise of economy and vulgarity in mass culture.

[21] *The Viola Sonata* was the first film in Soviet cinema where the music functioned as a metacommentary on Stalinism—the device widely used later in perestroika-era and post-Soviet cinema. On music as metacommentary in other films, see Clark, "Aural Hieroglyphics? Some Reflections on the Role of Sound in Recent Russian Films and Its Historical Context." However, as it will be stressed below, Shostakovich's musical metacommentary on Soviet history in *The Viola Sonata* still remains one of the

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most sophisticated and powerful in Soviet/post-Soviet cinema.

[22] The Scythians, ancient Slavic people, are considered to be one of the historical components of the modern Russian nation. Their image, partially thanks to Block, famous Russian poet, is widely associated with the ancient mythological power of the Russians and their connection to the forces of nature. It can be also referred to as a modality of the ancestral body, in Bakhtin's terms.

[23] Anna Akhmatova, a great Russian poet, and Mikhail Zoshchenko, a famous writer-satirist were subjected together with Shostakovich to harsh ideological criticism and ostracism by the government—the shameful moment in the Soviet cultural history. It was a form of public trial, a "sacrificial" campaign in which many official leaders and public figures, as well as the well-known writers and artists participated. Whether they did it willingly or under pressure remains one of the mysteries of a totalitarian time.

[24] For more on the ritual origin of the concept of fate, see Goran, *The Mythologeme of Fate in Ancient Greece.*

[25] The title of the first film (1978) by Aleksandr Sokurov—a representation of symbolic death, based on Andrei Platonov's story.

[26] This fragment in Aranovich—Sokurov's *The Viola Somata* is one of the simplest, in terms of devices, and yet most powerful example of "time sculpting" in world cinema. "Tarkovsky considered "time sculpting"—an ability to reconceptualize and (re)model time structures—the most essential quality of cinema art. For more on the conceptualization of time in cinema, see Andrei Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema* and *Time within Time: the Diaries, 1970-1986.*

[27] See more on a polyphonic type of consciousness, Georgii Gachev, *Zhizn' khudozhestvennogo soznaniia* (The Life of Artistic Consciousness) (Moscow: 1968), 168. According to this Russian cultural philosopher, "polyphonic consciousness" is: "The ability to see everything from different perspectives, from the past and from the future, to look at society through the eyes of an individual and at oneself through the eyes of society. This is an expression of the highest freedom and wealth of art, of its power, its ability to envelope into itself both life and thought."

[28] See V.V. Protopopov "Polifoniia" (Poliphony) in *Muzykalnaya Entsiklopediia* (Encyclopedia of Music). (Moscow: 1978), 4: 362.

[29] Yuri Lotman, "The Text within the Text," *PMLA* (May 1994), 380.

[30] See Alexander N. Tumanov, "Correspondence of Literary Text and Musical Phraseology in Shostakovich's Opera *The Nose* and Gogol's Fantastic Tale," *Russian Review* 52 (July 1993): We may assume, though, unfortunately this fruitful theme was not reflected in the film, that Shostakovich's association in the 1920s-1930s with Vsevolod Meierkhol'd—a great creator of metatexts in the theatrical sphere and the outstanding researcher in theater semiotics—was an important schooling for the composer in terms of the development of his artistic consciousness.

[31] Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre,* 21. Turner considered ideological systems (together with "myth, epic,

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ballad, and the novel") to be part of the group of narrative genres.

[32] It is notably ironic that the mechanism of the ritualistic semantic projection functioned without exclusion, even when a story took place in previous centuries. Images of historical heroes had to be shaped in such a logical context as to show that their sincere adherence to 'communist ideals', had they lived in the Soviet period, would not be doubted.

[33] The types of intertextuality in *The Viola Sonata* are (1) the musical texts of Shostakovich and the silent cinema (transtextuality, demonstrating the birth of a metatext; also a geno-textual type of intertextuality); (2) the musical texts of Shostakovich and Soviet propagandist newsreels (dialogic or 'antagonistic' intertextuality, the major components of the conflict); (3) *The Viola Sonata* and the musical texts of Shostakovich (the relationship of a hypertext with its hypotext, and also a geno-textual type of intertextuality); (4) *The Viola Sonata* and *Gorky: The Last Years*—the previously shelved film by Aranovich on the *civil silence* of the imprisoned Gorky (auto-intertextuality); (5) *The Viola Sonata* and *The Lonely Voice of a Man*—the shelved film of Sokurov, an interpretation of Platonov's story (auto-intertextuality); (6) and through Platonov's story—with the texts of Platonov (cultural transtextuality).

[34] It is possible to outline in *The Viola Sonata* the following levels of identification, which imply the controversial and yet unavoidable nature of the matrix identity: (1) the film authors with their hero—Aranovich and Sokurov with Shostakovich; (2) the film's composer (one of the 'filmmakers') with the film's protagonist; (3) Shostakovich with Eisenstein and the whole of avant-garde art—through the method of montage in the episodes of Shostakovich's musical reconceptualization of meanings in the silent cinema; (4) the film directors with Soviet cultural tradition—in showing the montage *qua* narrator and thus focusing on cinematographic language; (5)"We' with 'They'—Shostakovich's supposed self-identification with the participants of the *White Parades* marching on Red Square, and further on with volunteers of the Blockade; (6) the film directors' own artistic participation in this identity; (7) the poignant identification of the next generation of filmmakers with conformists of the Stalinist period, who cast stones at Shostakovich (the tragic guilt of the progeny); (8) the political conformists and the exposers of Shostakovich—in the episode of persecution, with the women and teenagers building houses ruined by war; and (9) Shostakovich and the authors themselves with those who rebuilt the country and those who continued to do so at the time of the film's creation.

[35] Bakhtin, *Aesthetics of the Verbal Art,* 283.

[36] Lotman, "Text within the Text," 379.

[37] The meaning 'myth' is used here in terms of semiotic anthropology rather than semiotics of ideology.

[38] Lotman, "Text within the Text," 378.

# Chapter VII. Rituals in Labyrinths of Postmodernity: *Scorpion's Gardens, Prison Romance*

Accidentally or not, postmodern films often are focused on the themes of ritual incantation, magical spell, riddle and labyrinth. This applies to many famous Soviet movies, such as Kira Muratova's *Short Encounters, Long Farewell, Asthenic Syndrome,* Alexander Sokurov's *The Lonely Voice of A Man, Days of Eclipse, Save and Protect,* Sergei Soloviev's, *Assa,* Georgii Danelia's *Nastia,* various films by Yuri Mamin and Sergei Ovcharov, etc.; all of which could be reinterpreted in the context of symbolic anthropology. In *Prison Romance* (1993) by Evgeny Tatarsky, for example, the incantation is manifest in the "mysterious Cross of Anthill"—the cast spelled by the criminal on the investigator. In *Scorpion's Gardens* (1992) by Oleg Kovalov it is a spell cast by a mythological monster (Scorpion/Dragon) on Soviet culture and its system of meanings. In *It* (*Ono,* 1989) by Sergei Ovcharov it the incantation on the entire national history. *It* is a sarcastic saga of Russian history, postmodern "chronicles" based on the works of the classical Russian writer Saltykov-Shchedrin. Nineteen-century satirical stories were edited and revised by Ovcharov in the context of twentieth-century political phantasmagorias on the Russian ground. In 1990 I analyzed the theme of spell in detail, using the material of the film *It* in my article "Find the Magic Word."[1] The initial condition of filmmaking in the case of *It* was the anxiety of mass consciousness: the country's feeling of total defeat by its own incomprehensible history. As a frustrated perceptual impulse, anxiety "can be resolved only by attaching it to the object; and if no object can be found, if our perceptual apparatus is not equal to the task, then one must be created."[2] The very name of the film, *It* is already associated with the creation of (or location on the semantic map, as the film was designed to achieve) a mysterious object that has magic powers over the ever-suffering Russian people. The film re-creates the situation of ritual magic: "It" is the evil object or evil spirit that cannot be named—

something that is in charge of Russian history. The ritual naming of the tabooed meaning of Russian history, and the revelation of the destruction of the Russians' Collective Body, although prohibited in verbal forms—in *words*—can be revealed in the *images* of ritual performance—itself a form of a "reversing magic". Great importance, stressed Turner, is attached to keeping secret the nature of the *sacra*—the sacred knowledge, the formulas chanted and instructions given about them. Among the sacred instructions received by the initiands during the ritual may be the revelation of the real, but secularly secret, names of the deities or spirits believed to preside over the rites—a very frequent procedure, noted Turner, in some cult or secret associations. The initiands, in the ritual manifestations of the divine wisdom, are also taught the main outlines of the theogony, cosmogony and mythical history of their societies, usually with the references to the *sacra* exhibited.[3] Thus, the evil spirit, hiding behind/inside the secret object/meaning "It" is unfolded in the sequence of cinematic images and, therefore, as designed in the antitotalitarian film-ritual, can be comprehended and defeated. The evil spirit "It" signifies here a coded system which has power over the unknown mechanisms determining cultural processes. Decoding and re-signifying this secret system becomes a semantic counter-strategy of the film-ritual. The "ritual magic" of postmodern films as ritual actions is directed at comprehending the incomprehensible—the mysterious logic and powers of spell—and creating a "magical" antistrategy for breaking the spell. Film as a kind of sorcery, a ritual action, is intended to free the spectators from the spell, under which the film characters, associated with the Collective Body outside the filmtext, fell. Thus, the ritual magic of the filmmaking would have to create an artistic structure that would be capable of removing the incantation. In the case of postmodernism, creating a counter-labyrinth of even higher ritual power than the one where the meaning was lost often becomes a semantic strategy, which results in the antinarrative forms.

Labyrinth is a traditional ritual structure of the world culture. It represents the Collective Body and the world modeled/projected as if *from within the ritual death*—

dismembered and deprived of their usual wholeness—achieving the "between and betwixt" stage in its highest possible degree of disintegration. If the monster is the ultimate dissociative agent of ritual semantics, the labyrinth is the ultimate dissociative chronotope. Similar to the initiand's state of *prima materia*—the world itself is represented as a primary plasm, consisting of disconnected meaningless pieces. The very image of labyrinth, its meaning and its chronotope are closely connected with the symbolism of ritual death. Postmodernism has made the labyrinth its favorite chronotope, and the context of postmodern aesthetics makes the cinematic structures of labyrinth even more complex and controversial. The montage of postmodern movies can be compared to the "cathartic dance" which would never bring the catharsis (or at least which shows that the discharge is something nearly impossible). The collage-type postmodern films to be discussed in this chapter represent a world as if seen from within the symbolic dismembering, when not only the identity of the initiand and his/her corporeality, but also the meaning and materiality of the world are being collapsed and broken down. Labyrinth, as a ritual symbol, is a reference to the symbolic ritual riddle, and both are deeply connected with the secretness of *sacra* and taboo. Labyrinth itself is a form of torture, symbolizing the superior difficulty in communicating the sacra, achieving the revelation and (re)constructing the world from bits and pieces. In this, labyrinth refers to both superparadigms—the ritual death-rebirth and the (re)creation of the world. Labyrinth is a precondition for solving the riddle/finding a way out, which point at the symbolism of ritual rebirth and revelation. However, the crucial issue of postmodern culture is in its inability to find a way out of the labyrinth: postmodern film often stops halfway to the exit, remaining within the spellbound place and establishing it as its habitat. Postmodern film, may be said, to stress the labyrinth structure in its first and last crucial moments—the cultural emergence-dominance and a question of the way out; the entry is inescapable, the exit is highly improbable. The two films discussed in this chapter represent two different versions of the labyrinth chronotope: the pathos of the first film is directed at solving the riddle (*Scorpion's Gardens*), while the sarcasm of the second (*Prison Romance*) points at the dead end of the labyrinth and impossibility of the sacred meaning, and any meaning at all. Both films, in a general sense, manifest the aesthetics of postmodernism and its Soviet version, socart (socialist art). The analysis of the first film will focus on the specific devices of socart as a meaning-making process, while the analysis of the second will emphasize socart in connection with the general issues of postmodernism.

## *Scorpion's Gardens*

The film is about the hero, the girl, and the dragon—seemingly archetypal narrative paradigm—however, it reveals the hidden *battles of meanings* in the cultural space, situated within a new post-Soviet cinema. The following study shows how the *ruins of the Empire* become a 'semiotic playground' for the post-Soviet filmmakers. Semiotic processes in Soviet cinematic consciousness are discussed with the focus on ritual functions of montage. Various antinarrative and antimythological trends are explored on the model of one film-metatext, *Scorpion's Gardens.*[4] The section also discusses the *ritual killings*—dismembering of the Soviet political body, as well as the dissociative functions of such semiotic counter-strategies as collage, grotesque, carnival, parody, necrorealism, socart, etc., in respect to the *body of myth.* The section also explores the *cinema of simulacra,* and continues the study of the connection between ritual, myth and metatextuality in the recent post-Soviet cinema. Theoretical issues of totalitarian culture, as well as 'semantic investigation' and semantic drama (derivatives from the semiotics of ritual) are discussed in the context of film.

Cinema, as "the most important of all the arts," was always extremely popular in the Soviet Union. The film industry had been encouraged and financed by Soviet goverment as a powerful transmission belt of propaganda. That is why during the seventy years of the communist era, the former Soviet film archives stored, as in no other country of the world, innumerable amounts—hundreds of thousands—of filmtexts that belong to the totalitarian sphere of meanings—something that in Turner's terms can be called the shades of the cinematic past. These texts now raise new theoretical problems for researchers in film studies, the semiotics of culture, and the semiotics of propaganda. This chapter will emphasize the methods of the semiotics of culture for cinema studies and for understanding the reality to which the visual images of Soviet filmtexts refer. Are they cinematographic reflections of Soviet life, of historical reality, or are they indeed the reflections of the communist *dream world*, a fictional reality of ideology? What new apparatus and notions should be used to analyze the cinematic sphere of ideology, the visual reality of the communist myth—a *simulacrum* which actually has never existed in the real world? How can the truth be separated from the lies, reality from mythology in the cinematic tissue of history? Can the concept of *historical responsibility* be introduced into film history and the semiotics of culture? Could we borrow the notion of tragic flaw from drama theory and apply it to the studies of text within a certain historical discourse?

A post-Soviet filmtext, *Scorpion's Gardens* (*Sady skorpiona,* 1992) by Oleg Kovalov, serves in this chapter as a "working model" for the discussion and development of the new theoretical issues. Besides their importance for understanding the post-totalitarian cultural condition, the conceptions under discussion refer to the essential problem of any national cinema: how to overcome dying ideologies and mythologies, which nevertheless still play a dominant role in culture. Investigation, by the means of cinema, of the dead languages inseparable of ideology may be one possible way of reinforcing the vital transformative processes of culture.

Many (film) texts created during the Soviet era, which had seemed respectable and trustworthy, and which people used to believe, turned out to be insidiously serving the regime: a variety of text-ceremonies was posing as rituals, disseminating in culture the false "sacred instructions." The text-liars, texts-informers, texts-compromisers, -appeasers, -polishers, -collaborators, -ideological overseers, -supervisors of the unconscious, -mystificators and manipulators, crafty cosmeticians of monsters and skeletons from the closet all played a sad but well-known role in establishing and supporting the Soviet regime with its system of meanings. An essential feature of the post-totalitarian cultural discourse lies in understanding that common guilt, as it unites both humans and texts, is the result of conformism and collaboration. *Scorpion's Gardens,* a film-collage created by Kovalov on the edge of collapse of the Soviet Union, was designed as a model of *metacultural criticism* to reflect on reality saturated with deception.[5] Kovalov's film-experiment can be considered a metacultural response to the devices of totalitarian propaganda, to the aggressive semantic strategies of Soviet ideology. Post-totalitarian conceptual art addresses the vital issue for our century—the semantic techniques of brainwashing, manipulation with texts, manipulation with meanings. It is intended to investigate the very credibility of visual images: "To believe or not to believe one's own eyes?" remains the question. The theoretical issue of cinematic simulacra—persuasive visual illusions of ideology (versus 'visual evidence') intended to daily brainwash the public—crosses the boundaries of Sovietology, becoming a topic of general interest for cinema studies and interdisciplinary studies of ideology.

**Film-Experiment.** The crux of Kovalov's cinematic experiment is in the creating of a new text by using only fragments of alien films, without any additional original shot or author's commentary, that is, exclusively by means of the cinematic rhetoric, by means of montage and music. The initial texts, both fictional and non-fictional, and mostly from the totalitarian epoch, are resignified through the polysemantic and sarcastic juxtaposition of images. Moreover, the purpose of the new text coming into being was to refute, by its wholeness and integrity, the meaning of the embedded texts/fragments and to propagate ideas diametrically opposed to the initial texts. Thus, the experimental trick or, say, the *superconceptual device,* which forms the new metatextual structure, turns the ideology of the original texts inside out by means which innivatevely use the same visual materials. The aim of the experiment was not only to represent the reasoning of others, but also, by means of montage, to explore an ideologized film text as an alien mode of thinking. The director prepared a tissue of the totalitarian cinema, cut film texts in hundreds of pieces for experimental purposes and exposed their distorted logic for public observation.

With his paradoxical montage, Kovalov uses a variety of heterogeneous musical pieces, among them Soviet lyric songs and official marches, as well as music by Shostakovich. Shostakovich's powerful musical commentary, Both sarcastic and tragic like in *The Viola Sonata,* gives Kovalov's cinematic collage a pathos and a philosophical dimension. In the film's *metasemantic montage* the very grammar of narrativity, the rhetoric devices become *dramatis personae.* The alien texts and their units become 'characters' of the *semantic drama* and perform in the metasemantic play, according to the director's ideas.

A former critic and film historian, Oleg Kovalov is the first serious Russian film director whose career began with studies in film scholarship and critique instead of the usual route via a strictly practical film direction background. While quite unusual in Russia, world cinema already has such examples—Godard and Truffault come to mind—film critics, who, as it is often written, saved French cinema, and moreover, created a new cinematic metalanguage, that of New Wave.[6] *Scorpion's Gardens* has once more demonstrated that, according to Bakhtin, metatextuality is a common child of both art theory and artistic action.

*The birth of the author* from the 'womb of theory' has left its mark on Kovalov's artistic thinking and on the very essence of his creative experiments. The director actually found his first film on the shelves of the Moscow film archives. Refusing to yield to a beginner's temptation to shoot any of the film himself, he composed a work that took on a patchwork quality, being composed of hundreds of alien pieces. Kovalov's "*death of the author*" or *author's suicide* taking place in the alien texts, was a conscious device, an experiment intended to test whether a film director could become an artist without producing his own visual material while creating a metalanguage composed of the alien languages of others. The elements of the conceptual game within and with the metatextual structure are the 'dead' meanings, symbols and images of the alien semantic system—here of the totalitarian ideology—which the author decodes and re-codes within the nascent post-totalitarian semiosphere.

**Sourses of Metamontage.** *Scorpion's Gardens* represents a category 'text-within-the text-within the text'. A number of heterogeneous film texts are embeded into each other within the film's integral structure. The film is also a *metafiction*—a "fiction that includes within itself a commentary on its own narrative and/or linguistic identity."[7] It would not be an exaggeration to say that Kovalov's experiment represents a current trend toward metatextuality in post-Soviet culture. Initiated by anti-totalitarian film art in the 1960s-80s, it was manifested in the films by Kira Muratova, Alexei German, Semen Aranovich, Alexander Sokurov, Sergei Ovcharov, Sergei Soloviev, et al.[8] Not only had film directors been looking for new cinematic languages, but they had also attempted to incorporate old cinematic languages in the metatextual self-reflexivity of post-totalitarian culture. The metatextual trend of post-Soviet cinema attempts to build a system of images reflecting the cultural signs of the past in which each image carries its own genre memory, corresponding to a series of similar symbolic meanings proper to other phases in the development of cinema. Ideally the viewer should be able to perceive the series of figures (not necessarily consciously, but at least instinctively), i.e., s/he should have the ability and the skill needed to perceive the image as a symbol, as a sign of alien language. Without the particular symbolic language of cinema as a language of quotations, the higher forms of artistic social consciousness cannot exist. The Russian Formalists, Bakhtin, the Moscow-Tartu semiotic school (Ivanov, Lotman, et al) have developed in Russian tradition the ideas of metalanguage as a concentration of meaning in the layering-process of cultural quoting which creates inter- and metatextual structures. In cinema, the visual image refers to various means by which cinema reflects the cinematic production of previous cultural periods, and assumes a systematic unfolding of its potential symbolic essence. This same figurative and semantic spiral of artistic ideas, with their interactions and interconnections, comprises the larger circle of culture.

The textual self-awareness (in Hutcheon's terms) of *Scorpion's Gardens* represents a cultural dialogue of the post-Soviet film director with the heritage of Russian symbolism (as art process) on the one hand, and with Russian Formalism (as art's self-reflection in theory) on the other.[9] After the blossoming of artistic self-awareness during the Silver Age of Russian culture (1910s-20s), art was submerged into the ideologized schemes of socialist realism. Myth-creating storytelling, simplified narrative plots and political subtext displaced the montage-type artistic consciousness for a long time from the horizon of Russian culture. The tradition of symbolic-artistic thought was forcibly cut short in Russian national history.[10] It survived predominantly in literature, thanks to such figures as Bulgakov, Pasternak, Mandelshtam; and in music, thanks to Shostakovich. In theater, visual art, and cinema it was virtually annihilated, especially after the deaths of such outstanding creators of metatexts as Meyerhold, Filonov, and Eisenstein. Kovalov's film-experiment marks a new stage in the evolution of Russian symbolism in the post-Soviet cultural history. *Scorpion's Gardens* is an example of how slowly, but inexorably, symbolic consciousness and metastructures are being reborn in post-totalitarian culture.

The film's organization has been influenced by the postmodern revival of montage, as well as the *aesthetics of the clip* generated and stimulated by the mass culture of commercials. The clip can be defined as a unit of cinematic collage, which reflects the dynamism of contemporary consciousness and the hypersemioticity of postmodern culture, as well as a conception of reality as the fragmentary and discrete, submerged into the frozen *Eternal Present.* In this aesthetics, as well as in the Soviet culture, the frozen time was masking itself as a Great Time, that of the blissful social eternity. The collage, as one of antitotalitarian semanatic counter-strategies, addresses the issue of false chronotopes, the deceitful representations of time/space as integrity. The collage-type structure manifests the postmodern loss of trust in the aesthetic concepts of whole composition, time and development. The very title of the film, *Scorpion's Gardens,* generates connotations of the chaotic spellbound time-space continuum. The film's title reflects the image of a magic labyrinth (of meanings) created by a giant mythological monster (scorpion? dragon?) of totalitarianism to entrap common sense and natural human logic. Thus the search for a way out from the perverted space is possible only within a ritual metatextual structure—solving the riddle, unfolding the labyrinth of semiosis. A required artistic model capable of finding a new sense, therefore, represents not a forward movement along a straight road—a traditional narrative, but rather wandering, roaming in a space of collage, where the labyrinth of closed time-space is the most suitable chronotope for searching out new post-totalitarian meanings.[11]

Among other sources of Kovalov's experiment the following should be named: 1) the montage cinema of Eisenstein (whom Kovalov considers to be his predecessor) and early avant-garde,[12] 2) the Soviet so-called *parallel cinema*, a neo-avant-garde underground movement of the 1980's (a form of alternative or "aggressive counter-cinema," in Wollen's terms), which worked mostly in the style of *socart* ("socialist art": conceptual art, a high form of parody that manipulates the clichés of totalitarian propaganda);[13] 3) conceptual films by Dusan Makavejev,[14] and 4) the banality and triteness of propaganda that outlived its own death—functioning without being aware that its language was dead—as well as the hypersemioticity of totalitarian propaganda, which provoked the creation of metatextual forms capable of reflecting and comprehending the very language of political demagogy.[15] Finally, the major methodological sources of Kovalov's experiment are the tradition of dialogue between texts/cultures—intertextuality (in particular, the genre of cento)—and the tradition of self-comprehension of culture—metatextuality.[16] The latter actualizes the historical moments of the death of ideologies and official mythologies and facilitates the creation on its ruins of a new type of semiosphere. The essence of the post-Soviet textual experiment can be also connected with Baudrillard's semiotics of postmodern culture, his theory of simulacrum and discovery of the autonomous life of signs within the reality of human beings.[17]

*Scorpion's Gardens* is a most vivid example of the paradoxical transmission of meaning throughout the cataclysmic historical epochs of the former Soviet Union. Like *The Viola Sonata,* it can be considered a text-monad reflecting within itself all texts of a given sphere of meanings (according to Bakhtin), and it is a text-generator of further texts, (according to Lotman).[18] Thus, Kovalov's experiment a link between the past and future of a culture, a stage in the process of the accumulation and transformation of meaning.

Besides being a metatextual experiment, *Scorpion's Gardens* can be also considered a dialogue (in Bakhtin's terms) between the patterns of totalitarian and post-totalitarian consciousness, or the *text-code*, text-bridge between semiospheres of two cultural epochs. The film-experiment is interesting from many viewpoints, however I will focus on the myth-shaping and myth-decoding functions of cinema, as well as the restructuring function of metatextuality with respect to the dominant cultural myth of totalitarianism.

**Text-Within-the Text.** The old film *The Case of Lance-Corporal Kochetkov* (*Delo efreitora Kochetkova,* 1955) was placed by Kovalov at the epicenter of his sarcastic metacollage of Soviet propagandist cinema. The genre of this feature film is a love story: a young soldier, Kochetkov, falls in love with a beautiful girl, Valentina. But then the archetype of the world culture is replaced by the specific archetype of the totalitarian mythology: the fathers-commanders tell the soldier that his love affair appears to be a trap. They put him on the right track by explaining the harsh truth: the beloved was not actually a 'beloved,' but a hostile agent. Kochetkov—a *young Werter* of the totalitarian metamyth—inspired by the trust of his bosses, agrees to spy upon his fiancee. Finally, as expected by his fathers-commanders, he successfully yields her up to the NKVD (KGB of the 1950s).

The very transformation of the archetypal love story genre into that of an espionage thriller indicates the paranoid nature of the totalitarian consciousness, which then becomes the object of Kovalov's artistic research or *semantic investigation.* The figure of the protagonist is pivotal: Kochetkov's title—specifically the word 'efreitor' (lance-corporal)—reverberates with fascist connotations in Soviet propaganda, a codification of Hitler, who was also of that rank. Thus, the unified totalitarian man facing love, a symbol found on dusty shelves in the Moscow film archives, exposes the tragic and ironic aspect of the symbolic topic "The Soviet Man on a Rendezvous." The film demonstrates that, in the semantic space of totalitarianism, feelings directed towards other living human beings should be replaced by "*the feeling of duty and love for the* *motherland,*" by love of abstractions.[19] The love for a Collective Body as a Ideologized Abstraction, is supposed to displce an interaction between its "flesh and blood" units—human beings. Thus, the interactions of real things and signs of the real in the conceptual film-collage takes the form of tragic peripetia. In the context of the totalitarian ideology, the distortion of and manipulation with the Collective Body-image transmutes it into a theoretical chimera, dangerous for the survival of the real Collective Body.

The world of the military unit, as evidenced by the embedded film text of the Cold War era, is a model of the communist system, a kind of Paradise, where fathers-commanders take care of you.[20] As God guards the apples from the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden, so the officers guard the soldiers from superfluous knowledge. The military unit, as shown by the director, is a world of reliability and stability, a kingdom of innocence, of ignorance. The hero is ensnared with taboos. And he is free while he is inside the unit, while he exists within the frames of restrictions. As soon as Kochetkov goes beyond the borders of prohibitions, he meets with misfortune. Outside the gates of the unit, or zone of Paradise, he would be immediately caught by the temptation, enemies, unnecessary thoughts. This is a parable, a lesson, a truth necessary for every ideologically initiated young man—love is predetermined to turn into betrayal and feelings for a woman should be replaced by love for an idea.

**Semantic Drama.** The film is a representative example of *semantic drama,* which can be defined as a dramatic structure, where identity and activity of meanings are being explored with respect to their ideological agenda, and which takes the place of the classical dramatic intrigue.[21] The hypersemioticity of postmodern cultural space, as well as confrontations between ever changing semiospheres cause meanings and symbols to become the *dramatis personae* of a cultural drama, reflected by a film or performance. It is not human beings any more—social characters or psychological types—but the semantic units—the signified and signifiers, signs, symbols, emblems and cliches—whose stories are being dramatized and which act as protagonists or background characters in the semantic dramas unfolding within the cultural space.[22] When a society is experiencing a *drama of meanings* that achieves the status of a social drama (in Turner's terms), it manifests the disintegration of the semantic space and impossibility of creating a new system of meanings until the revelation of truth—the cathartic discharge in the semiosphere. The catharsis then, has to be experienced by a new type of protagonist—not a hero-scapegoat, but a meaning-scapegoat—thus alleviating the tension of the semantic space. The function of meaning in the cathartic transformation of culture (here a post-totalitarian one) is a topical issue for the semiotic anthropology of culture.

The actual climax of the embedded totalitarian film becomes the dramatic epicentre of Kovalov's new metatextual structure, but it is reinterpreted with the opposite meaning. The turning point of the semantic drama and its conflict are exposed in the episode when Valentina comes to see her fiancee before leaving town for vacation. *Being on watch* in his military unit, Kochetkov does not allow her to approach him, even for a farewell. When she takes a few steps closer, he suddenly raises his gun and warns that he will shoot. What actually happens in this situation from the dramatic and semantic viewpoints? Nothing has yet threatened the serene lyricism of the soldier's love story. He believes in the future with this girl (the *fathers-commanders* had not yet presented her as a spy), and she is his *true love.* But the order is *sacred:* nobody, literally nobody, without exception can approach the military post. And if someone does, the order is to shoot. What happens next becomes the protagonist's dramatic and semantic responsibility—his tragic flaw. Kochetkov recognizes Valentina, but it is not *her* whom he is seeing at this moment, and it is not *him* who is acting. Like in a fairy tale, a magic transformation occurs: both heros lose their identity, transmuting into the new entities—the Guard and the Intruder/Enemy. But what is that power which is making the transformation possible? It is the magic power of semantization. In the situation of *Standing on Guard* (a symbol of the totalitarian outlook), all the individuals are immediately re-signified and hence re-identified—displaced on the semantic map. The girl, Valentina, in the semantic curvature of the totalitarian space, loses her identity as the beloved, a human being, as soon as she approaches the post, the *Sacred Border*. She becomes a pure Sign, a Role, which in this particular situation means the Stranger, possibly a spy and saboteur. The soldier's role as the *Standing on Guard* is a sacred one, hence anonymous. Kochetkov's individuality is melted, absorbed by the ritual and ceases to exist. Without any drugs, just under the magic spell of meanings—ideological brainwashing—he becomes a zombie. And anyone, literally anyone, including his fiancee, who may potentially violate the Border, is being signified as, and therefore, becomes an Enemy in the soldier's mind. The Border, both physical and semantic (in the film—the line around his post or a boundary between "us" and "strangers"), is a highly significant sacred meaning in totalitarian culture. Even when Kochetkov recognizes Valentina, or later when he comes to her home to apologize, to explain himself, he is absolutely confident that at the particular (sacred) moment and in the particular sacred space—a post—his actions were nothing but reasonable. "But you almost killed me!" cries a shocked Valentina. "But you should understand: I was standing on Guard!" answers the hero gently hugging his girl. As this neo-archetypal story shows, the border between fighting clans is not threateningly close to Romeo and Juliet any more. In the ideologically charged world, in the reality of hypersemioticity, the border comes straight across their hearts, and across their minds. When the sphere of symbols (ritual, ideological, political) intrudes into the life and starts dominating human reality, the transformation of meanings in the "right" direction, such as 'beloved' into 'enemy,' takes place in the sacred space instantly, immediately. In such conditions, Kochetkov's readiness to shoot is a spontaneous, if not a motoric, automatic reaction. It is important to stress that the hero's encounter takes place in the two chronotopes and two dimensions simultaneously—the people's reality and the universe of the signs—which are tragically intersected, as the film shows us. The transmission of the spectators' attention from one symbolic level to another becomes a semantic journey into the deep structure of the conceptual /metatextual drama.

Kovalov's metacollage exposes the world with ritual symbols "out of hands"—especially dangerous when, with all their power, they are highly ideologically charged and become a weapon. Kochetkov, in the climactic episode, indeed behaves *symbolically*, however, the symbolic action, his very *ritual behavior* may lead to a real killing. The episode has a profound symbolic meaning within both the embedded 1955 text and the 1992 metatext. In the original film the scene was intended to teach young people the designated ritual behavior. In the film-collage it becomes a vivid illustration of semantization as a social mechanism and of the rhetoric of metatextuality. The revealed controversy refers to the main conflict of the semantic drama: human beings are tragically transformed into abstractions; the signs displace people from their living space (Baudrillard). But even deprived of identity, semantized as abstractions and signs, real flesh and blood human beings, nevertheless, can easily be killed. Semantization does not make people immortal, like symbols. Victor Turner stated that "in the majority of public sacrifices" dying means "to be reborn in symbol."[23] The film shows that in the rituals degrading to the ceremonies (or the ceremonies posing as rituals) the opposite occurs—the transformation of people into the signs (*Enemy, Stranger, Jew, Black, White, Immigrant,* etc, etc.), which would however result in death physical, not symbolical. Thus the intrusion of signs into human reality is not just an intellectual game. The power of ideological re-signification—changing/re-writing identities—always has social and political sequences and can lead to drastic changes in reality itself, in life and death issues. In the ideological space where human beings are mixed (or messed?) with the signs, death has a dangerously physical, not symbolic, quality. The film's climax takes place not in an ordinary profane time, or in an ordinary profane space, but in a sacred time of *Being on Watch* and in the sacred space of *Standing on Guard*. The chronotope of the dramatic action in the movie is a magic circle of propaganda.

The dramatic denouement of the semantic drama is the moment when another totalitarian man—Khrushchev, a Soviet political leader of the 1960s, and one of the film's echo-protagonists—is identified as another *Being on Watch* by the director's sarcastic montage.[24] The leader relates to the soldier as a matrix-type, one from the top of the social pyramid to one at the bottom; nevertheless they both reveal the same type of mind. Khruschev's amiable smiles to Americans are identified as deceptive by montage parallels with Kochetkov's smiles to Valentina while he was spying on her for the NKVD. The hypocrisy of both echo-protagonists is signified by Kovalov's cinematic "projections" of Khruschev's mind, imagining (or modeling? dreaming about?) a nuclear explosion of New York during his friendly conversations with the Americans.

Experiments in conceptual art demonstrate the intrusion of ideology into life on a paradigmatic level. In the structure of *Scorpion's Gardens* as a semantic drama things not only coexist with the signs of things, they also confront them in a deadly fight. The interactions of real persons, things and signs of the real in the film-collage take the form of peripetia in the conceptual narrative, and manifest the metatheme of post-totalitarian conceptual art. Lenin's well-known words on Tolstoian realistic reflection of Russia's social drama ("Tolstoy as a Mirror of Russian Revolution") are ironically relevant to Kovalov's cinematic epos-kitsch.[25] *Scorpion's Gardens* is 'a mirror' of the revolution in the post-totalitarian consciousness and also a mirror of mythology, exposing the transmission belts of the totalitarian ideological machine. Metatextuality, as will be shown further, represents a highly complex system of mirrors, facing and reflecting each other. All together they are capable of grasping not only a multi-dimensional space, but also a dimension of time—reality in its unfolding and movement.

The relationship of the Past and the Present, presented in a dialogical polyphonic mode are the subject of the film as an intellectual process. The protagonist of the film is more than the typical hero of Stalinist aesthetics. He is a figure of propaganda, the animated hero of the Soviet totalitarian myth, the essence of which the new culture has yet to comprehend. Neither the people nor even "the tamed crowds" as Kovalov defined them, but the phantoms of brainwashed stupefied minds are the characters of this semantic drama. The film is a kind of waxworks show of the cultural heroes of the dead (or yet alive?) ideological space. The mummies, the plaster casts, the simulacra of demagogy—all are the personages of this conceptual action. Kovalov recreated in cinematic forms the *Theater of Shadows* of Soviet propaganda.

The place of artistic image in avant-garde structure is occupied by the very grammar of art. In postmodernism, as well as in conceptual art, a place of trope, of the artistic image is usurped by the sign. Various textual forms, such as emblems, meanings, symbols, slogans, bill-boards, text-codes perform as the images and *characters* of the dramatic action in the film-metatext. The clichéd narrative of totalitarian Soviet cinema was chosen to show that a well-established, archaic-type ritual culture is capable of remaining in a state of cyclic enclosure and balanced immobility for an extraordinarily long time.[26] And in this state of frozen time, the paradigmatic structure of myth becomes a syntagmatic level of the embedded story, the aim of which is to defend this frozen time, to protect its mythological harmony from the intrusions of alien meanings.

**Breaking the Text-Code.** Kovalov's film is a construction, where the embedded totalitarian text is presented as an *uninterrupted account*; it exists as a text-in-itself, a monolithic, compact, monosemantic whole. It is a *text-code*, a *text-myth*, which within the metatextual structure represents the type of consciousness that generated it. The pseudo-verisimilar style of the film of the 1950s ('visual evidence' in Soviet style) creates its image as a piece of truth, a natural whole, an organic tissue, a story narrated by life itself. It was the task of the film director to displace the coordinates of fiction and reality (the typical object of metatextual play) and to expose the features of fiction in the conditional semantic space of Kochetkov's story, which not only, in Lotman's terms, "pretends to be reality," but—it is necessary to emphasize—casts a spell on reality, aggressively usurps the space of life itself. What appears to be a real object, i.e., Kochetkov's life story, turns out to be only the deformed reflection of something that was itself a reflection—the myth of a myth, a symbolic parable for the sake of communist doctrine: the propagandist lecture, the ***simulacrum of simulacrum.***

Thus, semantic conflicts (mismatch/ misreadings /misinterpretations of meanings) lead to destruction in real life. The metatextual montage creates in *Scorpion's Gardens* a system of distorting mirrors, which nevertheless adequately reflect the curvilinear psychological space of ideologized consciousness. It is the world of perverted logic inhibited by apparitions, phantoms, and ideological ghosts. It is the *wonder world* of simulacra, where spies seem to be behind every bush, where every new man is suspected of being a stranger, a scout, a spy; where every event is interpreted as one of the enemy's intrigues. "It seems to him," "he fancied he saw,' "it appeared to him"... *To appear, look, seem, take the form of* are the signifier of the Standing on Guard/Being on Watch totalitarian hero; to spy, track, trace, shadow, inquire is the axis of this mode of action. Thus, the film—performing the totalitarian spy-mania, traditional hostility to the strangers in a typical metatextual play with the boundaries of the conditional and real worlds, exposes the archetypal paranoid logic of the culture behind the Iron Curtain. The film demonstrates the platitudes of the totalitarian consciousness and exposes it as an absurd, delirious impossibility. Here, it is the very style of conceptual art, its very metatextual organization, that is the only one capable of providing visual forms for the signs of reality, for the concepts of propaganda. *Scorpion's Gardens* vividly and visibly presents the *Unimaginable*, the *Unthinkable*—the Quasi-reality, the Pseudo-reality, the Kingdom of the Lie, where, nevertheless, three generations of Soviet people had little choice but to spend their lives.

By framing the mythological narrative with the alien fragments of collage, Kovalov destroys the naive logic of a "soldier's story." Various fragments function as the external signifiers, projecting their undermining meanings onto the various links of the sacred plot, and thus parodying them. They ruin the whole construction of the ideological narrative, dismantling it stone by stone, exposing step by step the absurdities of its logic. The patterns of Kovalov's collage which frame the body of the mythological narrative are: the scientific-popular film on the growing of plants; the science-fiction film on dinosaurs; the political documentary; and many others. Among all of these, one plays a special role in the metatextual structure.

Kovalov found in the archives another obsolete film of the 1950s on anti-alcoholic propaganda, where the actor Grachev, who played Kochetkov, happened to perform the role of an alcoholic being treated in a psychiatric hospital. The logic of paradoxical montage made it possible for Kovalov to unite two different signifieds—two roles of the same actor—into one new character. This collage-like character is composed from two texts, whose frames are interwoven. The composite image—one signifier (the same performer) of two different and opposite signified—generates a conflict, a cataclysm within the epic whole of the protagonist's image. The consciousness of the never thinking, never doubting, never feeling sorry soldier from the film-myth, was exploded from inside by painful self-torturing memories, and by Kochetkov's guilt, submerged in the unconscious, projected from another movie. The day horrors and nightmares which hunt Kochetkov-alcoholic are the skeleton in the closet of the totalitarian myth—the myth of the happy Soviet man who without any doubts betrays his mother, father, or beloved for the sake of the *radiant future*. Now post-totalitarian culture faces the burning issue, still after glasnost an unresolved problem of what to do with the Soviet people's history and everyone's guilt, for so long submerged into unconscious.

Another composite symbolic theme of the text-within-the text is represented by an educational film on the breeding of plants. Kovalov makes the story of the new kind of plant into a parable. He includes more participants—the very *tamed crowds* who observe the action from another textual reality. There are no frames in the space of metatextual montage; the frames are an object of subversive activity, of overcoming, or crossing the sacred borders of the semantic map. Nothing is impossible in the space of collage: characters from one textual reality perform as a chorus inside another. Hundreds of attentive guarding eyes, the "*unity of Soviet people*" (one more device of the sarcastic montage)[27] are proudly and silently watching from all over the Soviet Union the growing of the new plant—a symbol of a new biological species, artificially created by the totalitarian regime. The film's metacommentary suggests that the new type of man, the one who Stops At Nothing is gradually growing from the ground of totalitarianism. Superceding the frames of an educational film on plant breeding and clips of political documentary, the protagonist-meaning unite the film-collage with one metahistorical problem. Political systems die; nevertheless, in the twentieth-century history new fanatics of all kinds keep coming forward again. All the same meanings/actions—manipulation, brainwashing, extremism—are being dressed in new costumes, disguising old demagogies.

**Dragons.** Among the semantic counter-strategies introduced by the film, its dinosaur-theme—monster-making—deserves special attention for innovative methods of dissociation, metaphorization, and conceptualization.[28] The horrifying pangolins of all kinds from popular science and SF films emerges in Kovalov's film as a powerful device of defamiliarization. The dinosaurs' visual images, first appeared in Kovalov's film in 1992, were particularly fresh and nontrivial for they had no history in Soviet mass art. The dinosaurs in Soviet and post-Soviet culture were nothing like those in North America, where they have been adopted, or even tamed, by children's popular culture, and therefore made less effective as a means of defamiliarization. In *Scorpion's Gardens* pangolin imagery carries an inexpressible thrill of dangerous phantasmagoria. It awakes unimaginable horror, deep subconscious fears associated with a genuine life threat.

The first artists who brought the bomb of the dinosaur metaphor into an antitotalitarian cultural context were the Soviet emigrants Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, whose series of socart painting *Ancestral Portraits,* was exhibited in New York in 1980.[29] Their dinosaur imagery and sarcastic visual devices of socart were later adopted by Kovalov.[30] His cinematic experiment reveals a cultural connection between the dissident and post-totalitarian art. In *Scorpion's Gardens* the director attempted to rise the monster-theme to the height of mythologeme of anti-totalitarian culture. The New York exhibition presented pompous yet ominous 'official portraits' of the dinosaurs—Protoceratope, Allosaur, Plateosaur. The names sound like the last names of political leaders; and the characters, indeed, look like well-known Soviet political figures of the Stagnation (Brezhnev? Suslov? Gromyko? et al). The authority figures were depicted standing in triumphal poses against red curtains, a background traditionally symbolizing the "victory of communism." The paintings exposed recognizable images of power, however, with the tails and predators' teeth, with a threateningly silent seriousness, with a killer's gravity in their eyes. Their calculating and estimating, fixed, cold stare, directed straight at each of us from the epicenter of composition, awoke the foreboding of death. Thus political fears were given corporeal meanings, and it was the quivering flesh that responded from the depth of our bodies to the artists' political metaphors.

Surrealist collages in Komar and Melamids' painting, and in Kovalov's cinematic socart, reveal the sphere of the optative (modes of the unreal), showing images of *prehistoric* and *extrahistoric* (totalitarian) realities. Both 'possible worlds' do not belong to the Great Time, they in fact do not have a place in human history: the former *had happened before time*, and the latter *should not have happened at all.* The prehistoric pangolins represented the emblematic language of propaganda and the monstrousness of the totalitarian mind within the frozen space of collage. Parodying official portraits, the artists visualized clichés and metaslogans, the 'billboard art' of Soviet propaganda, the so-called "wall agitation." The latter used to decorate streets and offices all over the country, manifesting in visual images "*nation-wide love and unity,*"[31]—the unity with and love of the ruling Communist party, the main monster, the chief dinosaur.

The integration of the pangolins into political symbolism by Komar and Melamed, and later by Kovalov created the genre of *phantasmagorical conceptualism* in visual and film arts. By the method of ritual dissociation (isolation and separation of the elements), they united the incompatible—characters of the prehistoric "political drama" (all witnesses of which had died out millions years ago) and the participants of the modern drama. This antihistoric but very real drama had recently seemed to the millions as one which would never end. The inhabitants of quasi-reality, an antihistoric artificial space, have barely survived and still struggle with the political dragons. Looking closely at the faces of the living dinosaurs in the paintings and in the movie, catching their deadly cannibal looks, one can feel the heavy breath of *time out of joint.* That was a time of nauseating desperation and hopelessness, the closed circle of history—the totalitarian Stagnation that fed on human lives in the "scorpion's gardens."[32]

The pangolin images—dissociative agents—add both ritual and surrealistic overtones to the semantic study of ideology representing totalitarian consciousness, its archaic, prehistorical essence. The "invention" of the dragons as a part of antitotalitarian counter-strategies can be defined in Turner's terms as the ritual *monster-making,* intended to reenforce the transformative cultural field. The political idendification of the girl, whom the soldier fell in love with, as an enemy, a monster, by the fathers-commanders, turned into the indentification of the soldier as the dinosaur himself. The fairy tale does not come true any more; instead of saving a girl from a dragon, the cultural hero appeared to be a dragon himself.

The visual "documentary" representation of the dinosaurs in the context of the soldier's story reads in the film as impossible, paradoxically becoming factual, veritable, authentic. Their images, as surreal as they come, appear to change within the labyrinth of cinematic meanings into reality, non-fiction, as did the totalitarian mind in the modern twentieth-century world. As cinematic metonymic substitutions, the monsters are not the figures of the story, but rather the "acting signifiers," characters of the plot, modes and fruits of the mind. The dinosaurs also function as a part of the choir—the matrix system of "echo-protagonists" representing totalitarian consciousness with its multiple faces and unimaginable natural variety.

**Shadows of the Dead.** *Scorpion's Gardens,* as a cultural experience, illustrates the estrangement of the signifier from the signified in a *dying culture* and also vividly exposes how precisely a signifier becomes a signified within a conceptual text. The new concept of semantic drama that is introduced here is mutually connected with the notions of conceptual art and film as a rhetoric. They all emphasize self-reflexive processes of culture and illustrate, on the materials of cinema, the dominance of the paradigmatic over the syntagmatic in the sphere of metatextuality.

A characteristic quality of *Scorpion's Gardens* is that of *collage of the dead*, of the carrion—the remains of totalitarian mythology. The film represents the dying world, but not in a literal manner, like Soviet necrorealism does—the corpse-saturated films of alternative cinema.[33] The dying culture manifests itself in Kovalov's film in the conceptual, semantic manner: *Scorpion's Gardens* is an *anthology of ideological banalities*—a collection of the verbal and visual clichés of Soviet propaganda.[34] The cut-and-dried, played-out motifs, themes, characters and the frozen cultural symbols became, in the words of the director, the materials for his *ideological superkitsch*. Kovalov's self-proclaimed intention was to create "the panorama of the epoch's own kitsch."

What we see on the screen are the *ideologized* heroes, *stilted* conflicts, *bombastic* monologues and *declamatory* dialogues, *statuesque* mise-en-scenes, *bill-board-like* compositions of shots, the *naiveté* of the denouements, the *sugary lyricism* and edification of every scene. All this gives away the ceremonial mode—the 'bad theater' of Soviet 'late classicism.' Seen as an overwhelming panorama of clichés, *Scorpion's Gardens* exposes the poor taste of the creators of socialist realism. Its degradation from the start, as both style and ideology, becomes obvious and inevitable in the conceptual drama. The film as *ideological superkitsch* demonstrates also the hyperrituality of Soviet reality itself, 'hand-made', according to the ideological matrices of the communist doctrine. The embedded film text is peppered with propagandist clichés, characters express themselves through slogans, and the whole structure of the film narrative represents a 'metacliché', a 'metaslogan' of the totalitarian film-archive.

**Semantic Conflict.** Many shots seem stylistically incompatible with each other, like dinosaurs with the documentaries of Soviet life. In the same way, all other cinematic languages in the film are shown as alien to each other within the metatextual collage. In the *Scorpion's Gardens* Kovalov particularly reproduced the semiotic situation described by Lotman: within the metatextual space different languages interact, interfere with one another, and organize themselves hierarchically.[35] The heterogeneous style of a metatextual film-collage generates stylistic and semantic battles of meanings in the cultural (here: cinematic) space—a powerful source for the re-birth of the semiosphere. The semantic conflict is a pre-condition for the semantic catharsis to take place, to resolve the painful unconscious conflicts of meanings. The concepts *semantic conflict* and *semantic catharsis* deserve to be added to the theory of metatextuality, especially within the context of film art, as a form of drama.[36] Kovalov's film-metatext demonstrated the visual evidence of the fight between meanings for establishing a new ideological and metasemantic pyramid. [37] Soviet symbols and meanings do not give up the fight in the new hierarchy of culture. After perestroika, they were removed from the monolith of their semiosphere, split into pieces and placed into the semantic vacuum of post-totalitarian culture. The dead meanings of Soviet ideology, text-codes, text-myths of the totalitarian system, demonstrated a capability of regenerating the whole semiosphere and restoring its ideological integrity. Ridiculous, as the film shows, the dead meanings are still dangerous, like malicious afflicting shadows, like dinosaurs and sources of infection or radiation.

The controversial pathos of *Scorpion's Gardens* is directed inside, against the totalitarian cinematic text-codes, the building blocks of the film's metatextual structure. Kovalov's film is much more than just a semiotic experiment with patterns of the brainwashed mind. The inward semiotic conflict—a characteristic of metatextuality, actually reveals an ideological conflict within the post-totalitarian reality itself. The whole many-leveled metatextual construction of Kovalov's film does not appear to be an abstract mind game. It can be defined as a subversive activity designated to explode the still powerful totalitarian consciousness from the inside. The film manifests a new mentality attempting to overcome Soviet ideology through the destruction of its code, to win it by damaging its very tissue—the narrative body of the metamyth. A film-metatext, *Scorpion's Gardens* represents a study of the semiotics of propaganda, or in political demagogy in the form of an artifact. It is also an ideological act of a post-totalitarian consciousness—an attempt at of its cathartic self-transformation. Being a complex "metafictional paradox," Kovalov's cinematic experiment, however, lacks the qualities of a self-centered "narcissic narrative."[38] It is rather a social action, an attempt to solve an emotional puzzle. It is also a form of mass "shockotherapy,' based on the ritual techniques of aggression and provocation. The film represents a metanarrative method in the culture's attempt to heal the post-totalitarian 'collective unconscious,' that has yet to confront its own denial, the feelings of self-hatred and shame.

**Matrix Identity.** The process of inter- and metatextuality are closely connected with the process of re-identification; they are mutually determined and expressed. The film-collage reveals what Hutcheon called "composite identity," and a "heterocosm of fictional references" characteristic for the metafiction.[39] It is important to stress, that in the metatextual film-collage the fictional references function not as background characters, but rather as *echo-protagonists*—multiple identities of the main figure. This multidimensional composite identity in the film is constantly changing its shape, involving in the structure of metaplot ever newer and newer characters from intertextual and cultural spaces. *Scorpion's Gardens* is structured as a metadrama of identities: "who am I?" asks the lost and confused multi-faceted (almost many-headed mythical) protagonist. By the game of metonymic substitutions, Kotchetkov, the protagonist of the story, a simple guy, a mythological soldier, stepping into a metatextual space, transforms in our very eyes in the surreal variety of forms. Among his multiple faces are the newly bred plant, the activist of Chinese revolution, Khrushchev—the Soviet political leader, the hospitalized paranoiac, the naive young girl, sincerely singing ideological marches, the doctor who knows how to get rid of unnecessary thoughts, the desert lizards, the roaring dinosaurs at fantastic pre-historic landscapes, etc, etc. Here the idea of the Collective Body is simultaneously an object of textual "structural engineering" and of ideological mockery—what alliances the twentieth-century simpleton has got himself into?

The postnarrativity usually requires a multi-leveled structure of symbolic identification, which is connected with the multiprospectible structure of focalization of the Collective Body, represented in *Scorpion's Gardens.* One can see that identification forms a complicated matrix structure, and that the mirrored figures of the protagonist are multiplied and hidden within each other, thus enveloping the wholeness of the cultural space and anticipating a formation of myth through the substance of metatextuality. Multiplying in the intertextual space and touching upon suddenly new semantic spheres, the figure of the protagonist radiates the waves of meanings, often controversial. This creates a vibration of the multidimensional semantic universe, calling into question the stability and integrity of all interconnected meanings. Identification takes place in the film structure, however, not as a simple act of combining/multiplying the congruous, but as a cinematic 'comparative analysis', paradoxical conjugation of the impossible, of incompatible untranslatable identities. Thus, the established conflict of meanings is being gradually overcome in a re-identification process. The latter clears up of identities, but also of oppositions, functioning as a re-signifying process of macrocultural importance.

**Semantic Investigation.** The ritual action of solving the riddle, acquiring the secret of the monster can be regarded as semantic investigation in the sphere of metatextuality, which has to anticipate any re-creation of the semiosphere. From this standpoint, it is important to underline the myth-decoding, myth-restructuring function of metatextuality. The moments of crisis of particular ideological myths—their birth, death, and/or transformation—must result in the widespread appearance of metatexts, similar to the type of cinematic experiment in *Scorpion's Gardens*. A metatextuality in which embedded text-codes may be considered fragments of ruined myths is a process of collecting those fragments and, thus, demonstrating culture's self-regenerating and transformative functions. By the repetitive shamanistic, as though 'dancing' montage, Kovalov makes visible the transformation of the image into the code—a typical method of the semantic drama. He alienated symbolic images of the embedded text-code by intensive attack of paradoxical juxtapositions, by cross-examination of witnesses—various external signifiers. He puts a text-suspect through a semantic labyrinth of collage—a form of interrogation—through an estrangement by the multi-codifying system of heterogeneous meanings. The radical separation and estrangement of semantic elements take in *Scorpion's Gardens* forms hilariously comic, or sometimes hopelessly tragic. The paradoxical montage shows the drama of identity: the protagonist soldier Kochetkov is no more a human being. He is transformed into the 'typical hero'—a sacred figure of Stalinist propaganda, the animated puppet of the totalitarian myth. Not the people, but in Kovalov's terms the "tamed crowds," the phantoms of brainwashed stupefied minds reveal their true identity in the mass scenes of the film-collage. The mummies, the plaster casts, the simulacra of demagogy—the vivisected signifiers—all are the characters of the semantic drama. Kovalov's film is a high form of parody—a recreation of the *Theater of Shadows* of Soviet propaganda. The film, as a semantic metadrama becomes a kind of waxworks show of the characters and cultural heroes of the dead ideological space. The guilt of the totalitarian text is in manipulation with the meaning of love and in molding an army of obedient Romeos ready to give away their Juliets to the KGB at the first hint of suspicion or the bosses' order. The tragic flaw of meaning—here of the meanings: duty, honesty, morality—that had been taken advantage of and manipulated with, destroying thousands of lives—is what the film as a semantic investigation attempted to analyze. In conclusion, the strategies of the film's semantic investigation and structural engineering should be mentioned.[40] The cinematic *semantic investigation*, as it is shown by the example of *Scorpion's Gardens,* consists of the four stages: disintegration, multi-codification, re-signification and revelation.[41] As one can see, these stages coincide with the semantic structure of the ritual process.

> Stage 1 is the *disintegration* of the defendant's story, a destructuring of the mythological body, the monolithic, monosemantic whole of the mythologizing narrativity. The pseudo-verisimilar style of the 1955 film texts creates its image as a piece of truth, a natural whole, an organic tissue, it pretends to be a kind of *'story narrated by life itself.'* Thus, the Brechtonian 'radical separation of the elements' helps to displace the coordinates of fiction and reality (the typical object of metatextual play). This strategy exposes the features of fiction in the conditional semantic space of the soldier's story, which not only "pretends to be reality", but which is necessary to emphasize this aggressive usurption of the space of life itself.
>
> Stage 2 is *multi-codification*: placing of an *accused text* into the multi-genre space of collage, a labyrinth of heterogeneous meanings. The first stage breaks external links between the elements, while the second destroys the inner semantics.
>
> Stage 3 is *re-signification*: it is achieved by creating new semantic connections. It is carnivalization by means of a paradoxical montage, an aggressive cross-examination of the protagonist's external signifiers, witnesses from neighboring spaces, facets of collage. It is a unique and paradoxical way of estrangement through identification, and vice versa—re-identification through alienation. The introduction of an untranslatable, alien semiosis excites the "mother" text: shifts attention "from the message to the language as such."[42]
>
> Stage 4 is *revelation.* Removed from semiotic equilibrium, a text becomes capable of self-disclosure. By re-signifying montage, the director facilitates a new vision of meanings within the embedded film-texts. Revelation means unmasking, finding the hidden truth—establishing authentic identities of the investigated meanings. Destroying false semantic images, semantic catharsis reveals the meanings's true identity. For example, in Kochetkov's case, it exposes what the meanings really are—betrayal, fear, paranoia, and not what they insidiously pretend to be, signified or disguised by propagand as 'duty', 'honesty', 'love for the motherland'.

*Semantic investigation* that emplies metatextual *re-structuring,* is strikingly reminecent of the very paradigm of the ritual structure, with its distinct stages. Representing the ritual matrix identity, it creates multiple images of the explored meaning, a circle of *echo-protagonists* whose actions within their own spaces of collage resonate and estrange the hero's actions. Scandalously distanced from the hero—dinosaurs, plants, pioneers, crowds, paranoiacs—they are comic, tragic and fantastic. These external signifiers surround the protagonist, functioning as a system of mirror-images, paradoxical metonymies, carnivalizing substitutions. Identification via estrangement and vice versa, as alienating system of distorted mirrors, paradoxically reveals the truth. They focus and send, further into the epicenter of metatextual architectonics a light of new understanding.

The purpose of the metatextual *structural engineering* is to expose the dramatism in the reality of meanings, to lead meanings to transformation and discharge. Creating his semantic drama by means of montage, the director refutes the meanings of the embedded fragments and makes them propagate ideas absolutely opposite of those they had been designed for. He shifts in his metatextual montage what Bakhtin called "the axiological centre of the text's architectonics." Thus, the experimental trick, or, *superconceptual device* of metatextuality, which forms semantic investigation, turns every meaning and the whole ideology of the original texts inside out. This film as a cultural experience illustrates the estrangement of the signifier from the signified in a dying culture and also vividly exposes how precisely a signifier becomes a signified within a conceptual text. The experiment represented the reasoning of others, and by means of montage, explored a totalitarian film text as an alien semantic system or unimaginable mode of thinking. It disintegrated the text as a whole and performs the autopsy on the *body of myth.*[43] However, an extra seriousness, monologism of *semantic investigation* as a possible new authority, a form of potential 'official culture' is overcome and balanced in *Scorpion's Gardens* with the dialogical imagination and the freedom of play. The film-experiment is the liberated laughter over the carrion of totalitarian mythology, an anthology of ideological banalities—verbal and visual clichés of Soviet propaganda. After all, *Scorpion's Gardens* is also a clownery, a carnivalization of the semantic past, a mockery of the dying enemy—the ideology of totalitarianism.

Bakhtin emphasized the axiological significance of semantic processes. A semantic investigation may be intepreted in terms of anthropology as a ritual of iniitiation of culture—a sacred jorney, a search for new meanings. The structuring of heteroglossia—of various confronting versions of social meanings into a new hierarchy represents the next stage in the self-comprehension of culture and potentially forms a new semiosphere. A semantic catharsis of culture is an axiological consequence of the metatextual processes. Breaking *text-codes* with their totality and closed circles of meanings, demolishing the texts, which manifest obsolete identity of culture and encode regression, metatextuality actualizes the historical death of old ideology. As a socio-semantic process, it facilitates the creation on its ruins a new vitally important system of cultural meanings and values, so to speak, separates the hero from dragon.[44]

## *Prison Romance*

Whether or not a postmodern cinematic structure fulfills the ritual function of breaking the spell remains the issue for further discussion. Postmodernism appears to be an ambivalent structure, associated with both ritual and ceremony, which paradoxically breaks the spell and reinforces it on the new level. The theoretical issues of ritual versus ceremony and catharsis versus "anticatharsis" (the opposition represents ritual death-rebirth versus ritual death) will arise from the analysis of Soviet postmodernism using the material of the film *Prison Romance*. Its analysis allows us to discuss post-Soviet mythologies, issues of love and death, as well as postmodern modelling structures in respect to social dramas.[45] As postmodernism denies the very notion of movement, progress and transformation, how does it model historical processes and express itself in genres such as drama and film? These questions are the focus of the following section.

*Prison Romance* (*Tiuremnyi romans,* 1993, by Evgeny Tatartsky) has had enormous success in Russia, as well as among immigrants, deeply touching upon both nostalgic and masochistic strings of the "mysterious post-Soviet souls."[46] The film's genre can be defined as "*zhestokii romans*"—a 'cruel romance.' It is a melodramatic tale about a forbidden love between a criminal and an investigator, narrated in the style of *blatnoi pesni* (jail folklore song). The events of *Prison Romance* are a true story, something that especially fascinates the viewers. I would call this movie a true "*pulp fiction*" of the Russian screen—a triumph of postmodern aesthetics in popular culture.[47] To translate the scandalous nature of the story and the controversial characters of the players into the meanings of North-American culture, one could equate *Prison Romance* to a story of true love between Marsha Clark and O.J. Simpson, unfolding during the trial of the century. The film leaves the audience with a deep feeling of embarrassment, even shame, and at the same time with profound compassion for the victims of irresistible passion and for their tragic fate. Needless to say, like a possible Marsha Clark—O.J. Simpson love story, *Prison Romance* is filled with political connotations, as is everything in Russian art. One cannot find a single text in Russian culture without symbolism and ideological subtextuality. In this case, allusions are transparent like in the KVN.[48] The political satire makes the story of the forbidden love even more enchanting: she is the "Soviet Russia" and he is "Russian capitalism." Their union is shown by the film as unnatural, yet inevitable. This love-hate story represents the realities and knots of current Russian history, and perfectly fits paradigms of postmodern philosophy. *Prison Romance* can be defined as an erotic thriller and a tragic kitsch: its melodramatism refers to the whole culture of the *blatnoi folklor* (tales of the criminal world)—a subculture always stylish in Russia. The film uses narrative and genre clichés, saturated with extreme emotions and extreme banalities. *Prison Romance* quotes and simultaneously parodies the Russian *blatnaia romantika*—the naive romanticism of prison folklore, deep-rooted yet in the nineteenth-century genre of jail legend. The film's conflict and structure reveal a mythological quality; its artistic features are rather innovative for Russian cinema, and it touches upon the knots of contemporary social history.

Paradoxically, this commercial masterpiece of popular culture, the perfect postmodern kitsch, is, indeed, based on a true story which happened in Russia in the 1980s. A female investigator fell in love with a recidivist, a robber. Eventually, she secretly brought a gun into his cell; he tried to escape and killed a jailer. They both got caught and were investigated. He was sentenced to '*vyshka*' (death penalty), and she got seven years in prison, which meant a death sentence as well since the laws of Russian organized crime would not allow an enemy—a former police officer—to survive in jail. Tragically and ironically, the events happened when he was about to be released. Definitely, the story was crying out for a theatralization, and a movie was made.[49] But how did a real story of the Soviet years became a perfect postmodern kitsch, a narrative-puzzle, a classic labyrinth of postmodern performance? What levels of inter- and metatextuality does it achieve, and what new symbolic meanings does it carry out within a new historical and aesthetic situation? The fiction film completely reinterpreted the plot and resignified the characters and their action in the context of post-Soviet history and postmodern aesthetics. All cultural levels were united by one timeless metaphor "Russia the Prison," characteristic for all periods of Russian unofficial culture—classical pre-revolutionary, Soviet anti-totalitarian and post-Soviet. But within the postmodern system of meanings, where the victims are revealed to be themselves the executioners, and the villains are the victims, a controversial knot—the romantic unity between a jailed and a jailer—becomes a naturally perfect metaplot. This paradox of modern Russian culture achieves a status of 'archetypal antinomy', similar to that of Greek tragedy, which symbolizes for the society a cultural puzzle, a knot of meaning; and society cannot move on until this knot is untied. Thus, this tragic kitsch is one more way to touch upon—although turned into a cliché—the still painful figure of the tortured and the torturer in one mythological creature.

Soloviev is a well-read and a "well-watched" professional—a typical scriptwriter-conceptualist, who rationally, without any embarrassment, picks bits and pieces of world culture and current cinematic trends (as, in fact, a postmodern filmmaker is supposed to do). *Prison Romance* embodies Dostoevsky's motifs and is reminiscent of Strindberg's drama classics, *Dance Macabre* and *Freken Julia*. The film is also intertextually connected with several recent well-known movies made immediately prior or parallel to it. Among these examples are Louis Malle's *Damage,* about a forbidden passion which can only lead to self-destruction; *Silence of the Lambs* with its wearied (also 'through-the-bars') mysterious connection between a nice girl and a horrible killer; *True Romance,* a representation of a young hero who is at once a romantic bumpkin and a cunning antisocial killer[50]; *The Piano,* with its all-compassing element of desire, and a liaison between a noble woman and a primitive man. Characteristically, the unbelievably talented music by Kurekhin—a Michael Nyman of the Russian screen—plays a similarly significant dramatic and philosophical role in *Prison Romance.*

However, intertextuality with Russian and Soviet culture immediately highlights urgent ideological contexts, naturally adding the dimension of soc' art to the plot. The love for the outlaw—a criminal or political opponent—has in both Russian and Soviet cultures almost archetypal standing. Masha and Dubrovsky (a noble nineteenth-century Robin Hood in a story by Pushkin), Goncharov's *Obryv* (Break), *Lubov' Yarovaia, Sorok Pervyi*, and even *Zapiski Serogo Volka* come to mind, as the facets of cultural quotation.[51] Characteristically, the development of the plot takes place within the postmodern aesthetics not through the narrative, the development of the story, but through the *slippage*, the *trace* of meanings (in Derridanian terms), a paradoxical transformation of a social meaning gradually unfolding via incompatible heterogeneous symbols placed together in the narrative context. The formatting of unexpected symbolic rows, completely incompatible within an established given culture, and at the same time perfectly logical within a given text, is a challenging semantic counter-strategy of postmodern culture.[52]

The transformation of Russian *intelligent* with his traditional *sovest* '(concept of conscience /gilt and high spiritual standards) into a killer, mafioso, monster, is a controversial feature of the new Russian cultural hero—a representative of the so-called New Russians.[53] It is notable, that where Western culture does not see any contradiction at all—a Western intellectual can be an adventurous entrepreneur, a successful businessman—Russian culture sees an intrinsic cultural drama, even socio-semantic tragedy. The roots of this problem can be found in the two spheres—cultural and historical. In the system of Russian cultural meanings, the Russian intellectual, the *intelligent*, is primarily a person with a keen sense of justice, who cannot be involved in any morally questionable activity. In terms of macrocultural processes, we witness now a painful transformation of not merely the symbolic meanings, but the archetypes, which determine cultural systems of meanings. The historical rite of passage of the archetypal cultural protagonist—the mutation from the holy fool into the evil trickster could not pass painlessly for Russian culture.[54] Historically, the condition of current Russian capitalism—its early, wild form characteristic of the distribution and primary accumulation of the capital—provokes and is conditioned by the most vivid forms of social opportunism, immorality and criminal activity. The current Western parallel to the new Russian cultural hero is a clean-cut businessman with brains whose cultural representation does not carry any social drama. His Russian analog—a former hopeless romantic, bookman and escapee from Soviet reality into the sphere of intellectuality—has now to transform himself into a pirate, a ruthless corsair, filibuster of the early capitalist jungle. His alternative in the new historical condition is only to die out—symbolically, as a former cultural type, and literally—as a real human being unable to support himself financially, as well as to defend his life in the savage world of post-Soviet business. This type of business activity characteristically produces next to nothing, but is rushing to get a quick piece of the former country's collective property, meaning to grasp what was considered to belong to everybody, thus throwing again the majority of the long suffering society back into impoverishment and a new exploitation. The new cultural condition is profoundly confusing, I would say 'archetypally confusing' within the context of the Great Time and Russian cultural history. What and who *used to be, has been* and *would be* the "sacred—profane", "moral—immoral", the "criminal—justice', who is now the outlaw, and where his place is today indeed—behind the bars or on the legal (or even legislative) side of the new state— are all the key questions of the post-Soviet cultural process. The debatable role, and a tragic flaw of Russian intelligentsia, as a former *sacred instructor,* with regards to the loops, Mobius strips of Soviet history, is an integral part of current cultural discussion, which addresses the controversial interaction of the economical and cultural values.[55] It is obvious to almost everyone that it is only the new hero, the adventurer—the one who is still considered evil (and he is indeed in many ways) nevertheless is the only one who can save the future of Russia. However, the 'sacred' meanings of the potential and desirable future collide with the 'sacred' of the past; the culture enters the semantic and axiological labyrinth, the loop of history again.[56] The historical logic of new Russian capitalism—natural but no less tormenting—is incompatible with the traditional spiritual values of Russian culture, as well as

Christianity ("do not kill, do not steal"), and this social schism, an unsolvable dilemma is reflected in a number of post-Soviet texts; *Prison Romance* is one of the models of this continuing social drama.

To the actors' credit, they do not try to justify the characters' actions in *Prison Romance,* according to Stanislavsky's system—there cannot be a psychological causality or integrity within a postmodern aesthetics. They act rather according to the alternative Meierkhold's system, composing within one role a collage of image-clichés, patterns from various cultural traditions, designing a mosaic form of acting. They create postmodern "composite identities", which integrate incompatible psychological realities. Both actors, Marina Neelova and Alexandr Abdulov, use autoreferences, shaping a collage from old roles of their own and new cultural symbols. Neelova's "psychological collage" unites her beautiful, intelligent and fragile princess from Shvarts' fairy tale, the movie *Old, Old Fairytale* (*Staraia, staraia skazka*), so loved by the public, a single woman hungry for love from *The Autumn Maraphon* (*Ossenii maraphon*), and the naive teacher, idealistic *Elena Sergeevna,* who was tortured by a school gang. All this is sarcastically blended into the image of a communist bitch, a high profile government worker, a functionary of the Soviet criminal police. The film's Juliet, a female protagonist, is, indeed, a mockery of Russian idealism, of the sacred values of the intelligentsia. It is a parody of the classical image of Russian woman, The Most Beautiful Lady—a traditional symbol of Russia. Her acting self-ironically signifies the spiritual and compassionate girls of Turgenev, noble women of Chekhov—the ladies with the pet dogs, already humiliated enough in Mikhalkov's *Black Eyes* and *Burnt by the Sun*. Gradually, these images are turning into ruthless sarcasm toward an idealistic communist, an obedient officer, a 'nice lady' in police uniform and a prosecutor with death penalties on her conscience: "all six were executed." Abdulov plays a dissident mind—Pechorin, *lishnii chelovek* (a Byronic superfluous man), with the connotation of 'disappointed young men' of the Stagnation: Dal' and Yankovsky's Vampilov-type intellectual heroes. The image also includes the *Taxi-Blues* quotes through his character's (a former clarinetist) enchanting jazz improvisations, thus developing a theme of the once spiritual, but now degraded Russian *intelligent*, who in the new economic reality has no choice but to turn into a scoundrel. The actor's collage also incorporates his role in 1992 blockbuster *Genius* (*Genii*)—a comedy about post-Soviet Ostap Bender, an innocent trickster, charming invincible criminal. The acting-collage also contains the new features of well-connected mafioso, as well as finally with Chikatilo—a terrible monster, a disgusting real-life serial killer. The composite male image—the film's Romeo—is a mockery of both the Russian *intelligent* and the new rising cultural hero—the so-called New Russian—an evil trickster, a ruthless and hungry predator, young Russian capitalism. Thus, not just two romantic lovers, but the whole heterogeneous systems of symbols are paradoxically united in the two single "composite characters" interconnected in the conceptual game. They gradually reveal the plot's metatextual meaning under the cover of an erotic thriller. He is a Katiusha Maslova, she is a Porfirii Petrovich—a mythological couple of lovers.[57] Those behind the bars and those placing them there are the *Jailed,* and the *Interrogating* of Russian culture. They are phantasmagorically turning around, twisted and interwoven in one body of postmodern Androgyny, the two-face Janus on watch at the cross-roads of post-Soviet history.

The story itself provokes a discussion of what may be the last, yet untouched and undestroyed archetype of Russian culture—true love. It has always saved ever-suffering Russian heroes caught in the total vacuum of sense and action, like in *Voina i Mir, Solnechnyi udar, Dama s sobachkoi, Khozhdenie po mukam, Doctor Zhivago.*[58] The postmodern filmmakers question the very meaning of the love story, *a byl li mal'chik?*[59] Simulation, playing games is the inner action of both lovers. When and if they fall in love remains a big puzzle, an ambiguity, an equivocal trick of postmodern construction, an indeterminable truth. In this very sensual erotic movie, both lovers have cold heads and their own secret agendas: his—to find way out of jail, hers—his bank account and code. She was given a task to find where he keeps stolen millions, money previously stolen from the state by the Communist party Mafia—money for which he killed and robbed. They are bluffing, manipulating each other from the start. They both try to look soft and sexy to smoothly drive into each other's soul. At various stages of the story, each pretends to be attracted to each other, trying to get the advantage. Their love is phony, illusory, chimerical, unreal. It is a fake love, bogus, counterfeit, a dangerous game with each other's feelings (and yet there is a pathological enjoyment of eroticism via deception, which is developing the action). The sarcastic playful crew of characters and authors use the most sparkling clichés of romantic seduction, revealing an ugly disgusting game not only with human beings but with the very expectations of the archetypal romantic genres. The episode of the heroes' *enchantment* is shaped by bits and pieces from the most trivial, tasteless and vulgar devices: fortune-telling, diviner's prediction, fatal attraction to the beautiful woman, reading lines on the hand—the mysterious Cross of Anthill. All this nonsense, however, is shown as capable of turning the plot and the characters' world upside down. Here, in creating this favorite postmodern elementa of simulacra, the filmmakers' aesthetic pleasure reaches its high. However, the episode which is signified as the focal in the development of the story, is that of the divination—a ritual communication with the beyond signified as one of the most important actions in Turner's semiotics of ritual. The prisoner (the one from the liminal space), the murderer (the initiated by death) appears to be a true "diviner" forecasting the heroine's fate and turning it in the unpredictable direction. Represented with all postmodern irony, the episode of divination carriers a serious ritual element, it breaks through the boundaries—those of the prison bars and common sense of post-Soviet reality. The one who is signified as the initiated, the Wizard, Man of Magic power, who does know the truth, who has access to the language of future and sacred communication with the beyond is the same man who is becoming Russia's new ruling class—the "wizard of history", the mafioso, the gangster-type. He does not hesitate to kill; thus, he has a special closeness to the sphere of death. There is something horrifying in this revelation, but the culture seems to adjust to this "sacred connection," suppressing doubts and moral reservations. The postmodern film, with some spiritual agony, self-irony and nostalgic mythologization (in this case, the "perfect world" of the prison folklore), does indeed expose and at the same time sacralize the new cultural hero. Thus, the film communicates with the audience with emotions of tragic sarcasm, and yet with hope for the Powerful Man—whoever he is—who would come and save, take care of the lost feminine Russia (exactly as Russian philosopher Berdiaev described it). The ambivalent erotic and psychological interplay between the two composite characters manifest the film's "ritual dance" around Russia's moral values and historical future. Both romantic lovers are 'no good'. There is no prey and no predator, rather two monsters. The protagonist is an antagonist and vice versa. The postmodern Juliet, symbolizing the sinful Russia—Soviet system, and Romeo, violent and dangerous Russian capitalism—a ruthless mafioso, are cynically fighting over hidden party money—the country's stolen treasures, while playing the old game of romance.

Targeting different audiences, the film contains simultaneously several levels. The first is that of popular culture—a soap opera, a male version of *Izaura*,[60] a 'true story': tears, sufferings, love and death, the heroes' passion, the viewers' compassion, etc., resulting in an enormous commercial success. The second level is that of conceptualism and sophisticated postmodern *writing*—skillful exercises in the filmmakers' quoting behind the naiveté of a love story, with a poignant sarcasm at every step of the plot. A typical case of socart, a talented collage of impossibilities, it is a (self)parody of the fictional worlds of Russian, Soviet and post-Soviet cultures. Ironically disguised as a 'true story,' the film is a postmodern 'reality check.' However, there is one more level, completely unexpected for the triviality of kitsch—unconventional within the postmodern context element of pathos, which brings to this work a mysterious quality of high art, and controversial connection to the issues of classical Russian and world culture. There is something beyond the cynical postmodern blend of irony with tragedy, since the pure melody of Kurekhin's tune is carrying a magic. Like Nyman's music for *The Piano,* Kurekhin's tune is not involved in the characters' truths and lies or in the postmodern labyrinths of meanings, but keeps its own, clear path—the divine perspective on human lives. Having no trust in reality any more, the music refers to the modes of optative—the last resort of the sacred, the metaspace of *'would be,' 'could be," 'should be'* in the lives of human beings (the domain of the Collective Body). From here the musical plot develops the chronotope of the 'possible worlds,' the infinite perspective within a flat postmodern collage. While postmodernism questions the axiom of true love, the music questions the question. Kurekhin brilliantly transforms postmodern dissonances into a shamelessly romantic, mysterious melody, which comes and go, giving the story of deception the benefit of the doubt. It is only the music that gives the exhausted and disgusted viewers a sudden perspective of a true "true love"—an authentic affection-compassion, that paradoxically may have happened with the characters without their own knowledge, and in spite of the ruling aesthetic laws. While the film exposes the disintegrated Collective Body and dismembered social reality, the music represents in the film the true voice of the *sacra:* the Collective Body's perspective and the opportunity for love unachievable in the historical world, but present in the optative, non-existing but "possible world" of sacred values, connected to the modality of procreation and creation in a real humane world.

However, with all the ups and downs of the postmodern plot, the Mobius strip of "*lubit - ne lubit*", "loves me, loves me not", the drama has to resolve its contradictions in a form of catharsis. In particular, a postmodern drama, so overloaded with antinomies, should discharge the heroes' and viewers' extreme emotional tension. But catharsis, the ritual rebirth is something that would never happen in postmodernism. The powerful but single modality represented by the music does not create an ultimate emotional resolution of the entire hypertension accumulated within the postmodern dramatic labyrinth. And here we approach an anthropological dimension of the postmodern performance. According to Turner, social drama consists of four stages: (1) *Breach* of regular norm-governed social relations; (2) *Crisis*, during which there is a tendency for the breach to widen; (3) *Redressive action*, which includes art, legal machinery and other forms of ritual performance, and (4) *Reintegration.*[61] The character of postmodernism, in respect to the function of performance as a redressive action, leads to situations when social drama is not resolved, but when conflict slips back to the stage of crisis, reinforced and intensified. The second and third stages endlessly result in each other, and the expected forth stage—resolution, reintegration never comes. After experiencing a *pseudocatharsis*—a false emotional discharge—the public experiences *anticatharsis:* it is affected and enslaved by the same set of moral conflicts, now even more deeply. Turner's theory gives us an opportunity to explain the responsibility of ritual performance (here: a postmodern film/drama) as a redressive action. Art is not simply a reflection of social processes, but an active mode of their development. Thus, social anthropology determines the film/drama's function as a redressive action, without the success of which the reintegration of social schism would never take place. We return to the concept of social responsibility of art, but in the context of Turner rather than Marx.

The social drama, whose contradictions cannot yet be resolved within this culture, cannot indeed be resolved within the performance, its mere projection. However, the dialectics between the art forms and social dramas have a reciprocal meaning. The postmodern drama, as a ritual performance, reflects and contributes to the vicious circles of culture. It is both a tuning fork of deep cultural tension and an influential social action. The postmodern ritual performance rejects the very concept of resolution and shows no ways for reintegration. *Prison Romance* reveals that Russia, as a collective body and mind, a cultural entity, is yet unable to resolve its drama, to choose between the old and the new in the forms it sees them. Both appear to be sinful, impure, and promise no good. The words of Russian fairy tales manifest the crossroads of the fruitless darkness: "If you turn right, you will lose your horse; if you turn left, you will lose you head."[62] None of the ways promises hope; postmodern art expresses this cultural fear and loss of orientation. One cannot take sides between the lovers, since they symbolize a forced union and unnatural passion between the idealistic, guilty and exhausted Russia and a sexy, but brutal and vicious capitalism. Their child, conceived in the jail by two sinful parents, symbolizes the future of Russia; the film asks, what awaits it?..

The divine moment of conception—sacred within the semiospheres of ritual and the Collective Body—becomes the ultimate test of the historical model investigated by the postmodern film. Postmodernism questions the ritual, as it does question everything else, raising the discussion on whether or not individual souls and the Collective Body survive in the time when heroes are monsters, and vice versa, and when dissociative agents are the only ones who possess creative powers.

The heroine of *Prison Romance* is inter- and metatextually connected with the female protagonist of *Commissar*. Both are the woman-warriors fighting for the Soviet regime, sarcastically linked to each other within the perfect circle of Soviet/post-Soviet culture, from the Thaw of the 1960s to Postmodernity of the 1990s. The roads of war, and the cells of a penitentiary are the settings for their love stories and their rites of passage to the motherhood. The first abandoned her child for the sake of the great political purpose—fighting the class enemies, the second ends up conceiving a child from a murderer and foe. The social, metahistorical action of a Soviet woman-warrior has proved its lack of sense.

## Notes:

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[1] See my "Find the Magic Word."

[2] Tuzin, "Miraculous Voices," 579.

[3] See, Turner, *The Forest of Symbols,* 103.

[4] This section, the analysis of *Scorpion's Gardens,* is forthcoming in *Cinema Journal* (Fall 1998), publication of the American Society for Cinema Studies. The earlier version of this study was developed during my research on the semiotics of culture at the University of Jerusalem in 1993 and at the University

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of Alberta in 1994. Different excerpts were later presented at the XIY World Congress of the Association of Comparative Literature, at the Round Table *Metatextuality in Literature, Film and Mixed Media* (University of Alberta, Edmonton, August 19, 1994), and at the conference *Semiotics as a Bridge between the Humanities and Social Sciences* (University of Toronto, November 4, 1995); the papers have been submitted to the proceedings of both conferences.

[5] *Scorpion's Gardens*—script, montage and directing by Oleg Kovalov, "Lenfilm "studio, St.-Petersburg, Russia, 1992. Other films by Kovalov: *The Island of the Dead* (*Ostrov mertvykh,* 1992), *Concert for the Rat* (*Kontsert dlya krys,* 1995) and *Sergei Eisenstein: Autobiography* (*Sergei Eizenshtein: Avtobiografiia,* 1995).

[6] On inter- and metatextual connections of *Scorpion's Gardens,* see Oleg Kovalov, "December Theses: Towards 100-Anniversary of Cinema" in *Iskusstvo kino,* 11, (November 1995), 77. Everything in today's cinema, Kovalov points out "is no longer new: there is no progress any more. Progress will be possible when we restore the traditions of cinema—the time when filmmakers shoot a shadow moving in the street, leaves trembling in the water... because cinematography... is 'the imprinted time' [In Tarkovsky's terms]. It is time that is a material here, an object of sculpting, in a similar way as stone, marble is a sculptor's object... As long as we stopped working with this element [time], there will be no cinematic art. Cinema now is narrating the stories—it is not interesting... In Russian cinema what is alarming is the filmmakers' ignorance, semiliteracy, the absence of directors with encyclopedic education... All great directors—Fellini, Pasolini, Eisenstein et al—were nourished by the world culture, and their shots reflected this. Contemporary Russian directors have very poor associative range, and therefore films are flat and trivial... American cinema, even commercial, is much richer. [In] any thriller, even a bad one, there is channel into the mythology of humankind, the fight between good and evil, adaptation of great culture, references to literary and film classics... All this makes pictures interesting and substantial... I want to name four directors who have determined the development of film language; Griffith, Eisenstein (who is still influencing Coppola and all American film epic), and Antonioni—the greatest innovator of all. In Russian cinema, the most underestimated... was Vertov... The style of film art was determined and diffused by Griffith, Eisenstein, Godard. The other men of genius are: Fellini, Pasolini—[they] have influenced... the world culture." In this article Kovalov follows Tarkovsky in emphasizing the time factor in cinema (or, the chronotope, in Bakhtin's terms—conceptualization of time-space). He also points at the essential role of metatextuality, which in terms of the semiotics of culture may be interpreted as ritualism of the very cinematic utterance, where filmmaking represents and reinforces interactive process with(in) the diverse systems of sacred cultural symbols.

[7] Linda Hutcheon, *Narcissic Narrative: Metafictional Paradox,* 1.

[8] See, for instance, my "Find the Magic Word."

[9] The film's title is a symbolic-metaphoric signification of the Soviet wonder world portrayed in the movie

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and of its dictator, the chief villain. If one tries to interpret the film's enigmatic name, the symbolic meanings of 'garden' and 'scorpion', in both the world and Soviet culture may add to our understanding of the film's metameaning. 'Scorpion' is associated in many world cultures with death and betrayal. But what is more interesting, it is believed to die after giving birth. Thus, Scorpion in mythology tries to avoid birth-giving at all costs. The domain of Scorpion is incompatible with the domain of birth-giving, the scorpion may be considered the ultimate enemy of the Collective Body. The symbolism of scorpion is also equivalent to that of a hangman (i.e. to the state murder in Soviet conditions). See, J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (London, 1971), 280-281. "Garden," a world symbol of primordial harmony and fruitfulness/abundance, has obtained in Soviet culture a status of an ideologized root-metaphor, which carried a meaning of Soviet country as a new paradise, and the function of Soviet people as the gardeners of a new life. On the metaphor of the garden in Soviet literature, see Clark, *The Soviet Novel,* the chapter "The Machine and the Garden: Literature and the Metaphors for the New Society." Thus, the film's both metaphoric and sarcastic title may be interpreted as an *Edem of death,* an artificial symbolic garden where nothing can grow except the poisonous fruits of ideology and the wrong ideas.

[10] As Kovalov stated, it was his profound dissatisfaction with the condition of editing art, that was one of the stimuli of his metamontage: "When I started working on *Scorpion's Gardens,* I was depressed by the absence of avant-garde element in our cinema, and most of all, by the flat, trivial narrative montage that lacks imagination," "Tragediia besstil'ia" (The Tragedy of Cinema without Style). Interview with Oleg Kovalov by Anzhelika Artiukh, *Iskusstvo kino,* 6 (June 1995), 83.

[11] In new Russian culture "the desire to invent new forms of cultural wholeness, new foundations upon which to build, coupled with a deep suspicion of such potentially totalizing models"—a quote from Ellen Berry, "Afterword: Postmodernism East and West," in *Re-Entering the Sign,* 338.

[12] On the semiotics of montage and Eisenstein's theory and practice of montage, see Ivanov, *Essays on the History of Semiotics in the USSR.* Lary's interesting ideas on the film as a vision, on Eisenstein's tradition of ecstatic montage and "cinema of cruelty" are relevant to the discussion of *Scorpion's Gardens,* see his *Dostoevsky and Soviet Film: Visions of Demonic Realism,* particularly, the chapter, "Power and the Exorcism of Genius." On disruptive-associative montage in Russian constructivism, see Vlada Petric, *Constructivism in Film: the Man with a Movie Camera. A Cinematic Analysis* (Cambridge, 1987).

[13] Mikhail Epstein suggests that socart is an alternative name for late-Soviet conceptualism. See his "The Origins and Meaning of Russian Postmodernism," in *Re-Entering the Sign,* 61. On socart, see more in various essays of this collection. For example, Vyacheslav Kuritsyn writes in "Postmodernism: a New Primitive Culture": socart is "a variant of non-conformist art, a means of toppling and destroying the totalitarian aesthetic," and it is also "the highest stage of socialist realism, as a phase in its disintegration. Socart works with the manner of execution, devices, and conceits of Soviet art—not deforming them, but on the contrary, reproducing them with an extremely serious appreciation for the requirements of the

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method and thereby revealing the ontological uselessness of those very demands... Socart: it takes Soviet artistic style to a logical extreme," 55. See also Ellen Berry "Afterword: Postmodernism East and West": "In the Soviet context, ideas—denuded of a material referent, vacuous signs in a world of "spectral and annulled realities"—are in fact the only 'true' and 'genuine' substance of the Soviet lifestyle. Therefore they become the necessary building blocks of a contemporary art," 344. *Scorpion's Gardens* also contains elements of satire, which is an integral part of conceptual art, essentially a form of parody. More on theoretical aspects of the connection between conceptual art (socart) and satire, see *Re-Entering the Sign* and on elements of satire in Soviet cinema, see Andrew Horton, *Inside Soviet Film Satire,* especially the article by Maya Turovskaya, a prominent (post)Soviet film scholar. In this important article she writes: "The object of parody in *Volga, Volga* is for the first time that "sacred beast" which was always something called "the people," thus indirectly defining also the composite protagonist of *Scorpion's Gardens.* Tyrovskaya, "The Strange Case of Making *Volga, Volga,*" 80.

[14] Besides other influences, Kovalov mentioned the effect made on him by Yugoslavian director Dusan Makavejev, particularly his *Innocence Unprotected,* the film Kovalov criticizes, but acknowledges as one of his primary sources. See Interview with Oleg Kovalov," Publications of the 1992 Berlin International Film Festival. On possible inter- and metatextual connections of Kovalov's film, see more on Makavejev's *Love Affair* and *Mysteries of the Organism,* in Daniel J. Goulding, "Makavejev," in *Five Filmmakers: Tarkovsky, Forman, Polanski, Szabó, Makavejev,* ed. Daniel J. Goulding (Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1994): 209-63, and Biro, *Profane Mythology,* 93-94, 5, 107.

[15] See Elena Usumova: "The countless slogans, quotes and monotonous posters surrounding a Soviet person during his entire life had lost their original meaning and turned into a part of the scenery, like, for example, an advertisement for Coca-Cola in American towns," quoted by Berry, "Afterwords: Postmodernism East and West," 344.

[16] The cento represents forms of intertextuality from montage to parody. Cento is an ironic re-composition of a certain, often well-known text, when all the elements are the same but presented in a new combination. Cento as a genre emphasizes the montage nature of parody, and the very creative action as a self- reflective form of art. On cento in the history of culture, see Theodor Verweyen and Günther Witting, "The Cento. A Form of Intertextuality from Montage to Parody," in *Intertextuality. Research in Text Theory*, ed. Heinrich F. Plett (Berlin & New York, 1991), 165-181. On the theory of intertextuality and its variations in forms and genres, see Heinrich F. Plett, "Intertextualities," 3-30, and Udo J. Hebel, "Towards a Descriptive Poetics of Allusion," 135-165, in the same collection.

[17] See Jean Baudrillard, *Selected Writings* (Cambridge, 1988) and *Fatal Strategies* (New York, 1990).

[18] See, for instance, Mikhail Bakhtin, *Voprocy literatury i estetiki* (Issues of Literature and Aesthetics) (Moscow, 1975), and *Aesthetics of the Verbal Art,* as well as various translations of his works in English. On Lotman's semiotics of culture, see his *The Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*

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(Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1990).

[19] A Soviet propagandist cliché. Here and further in the text, in quotation marks and italics, are the slogans of Soviet propaganda.

[20] "I wanted to create a shot with a [magic] mirror: Kochetkov's face is disappearing in the mirror, and there is a strange landscape, like the image of the wonderworld. It is the metaphor of Eternity looking at him from within the wonderworld, and suddenly, there is a footage: "Fix your uniform! [a military command]. But the animators could not do it... And I decided to make the whole picture based entirely on montage—something that the studio cannot ruin." Interview with Oleg Kovalov, Publications of the 1992 Berlin International Film Festival.

[21] Introducing here the concept of semantic drama, I would like to point at the timely thesis of the British film theorist Roy Armes: the urgent necessity to re-acquaint contemporary film theory with the key concepts of drama theory, and to look at film as a drama rather than as a story. See his *Action and Image: Dramatic Structure in Cinema.*

[22] Among the most recent and vivid examples of *semantic drama* in North American media and film culture are *A Time to Kill,* the animated cartoon series *Simpsons*, and O.J. Simpson Trial media epos.

[23] Turner, *Blazing the Trial,* 112.

[24] The collage does not recognize the centre and the periphery, therefore the collage-type film or drama does not distinguish between the main character and the characters of the background, therefore emphasizing the matrix identity of the characters. The supporting cast, the extras become the stars of the performance. For the film-collage and semantic drama the notion of echo-protagonist should be introduced to replace the traditional notions of 'main hero' and 'secondary *dramatis personae*.' Furthermore, the collage units are not only equal to each other in terms of the architechtonics of the whole, but their boundaries are impenetrable. Each of the characters has a significance of an autonomous protagonist within its own unit; none of them is subordinate to each other—they all act as mirror-images, as echo-protagonists of each other's drama. In the highly sarcastic socart type of conceptual drama, as well as usually in postmodern performance, the protagonists are also their own antagonists—the prince and the dragon, Othello and Yago in one composite image. Desdemona definitely has no chance to survive in the world of their cooperation.

[25] With a bitter self-irony Kovalov confessed: "The world of the lance-corporal Kochetkov is to a great deal the world of my parents and of my own childhood." "Tragediia besstil'ia" Interview with Oleg Kovalov by Anzhelika Artiukh, 83.

[26] Lotman, "The Text within the Text," 379.

[27] A slogan of Soviet propaganda.

[28] On the semiotic function of dragons (monster-making) with respect to the "law of dissociation" in ritual and cultural mythologies, see Turner, *The Forest of Symbols,* 104-6. On the narrative and ritual semantics of the dragon-symbol (*zmei,* a giant often three-headed snake in Russian myths), see Propp, *Historical*

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*Roots of the Wondertale,* the chapter "At the Fire River." For more on symbolic meanings of the dragon in Russian mythology, see Afanas'ev, *The Tree of Life,* 253-92 and Cherepanova, *Myths and Legends of the Russian North,* 175-77.

[29] For more on Komar and Melamid, see M. Rueschemeyer et al., *Soviet Émigré Artists* (New York & London, 1985), and Viacheslav Kuritsyn, "Postmodernism: the New Primitive Culture" in *Re-Entering the Sign.*

[30] In particular, see Berry: "Ironic appropriation of the signs of Communist ideology is one aesthetic response to the recognition of a restricted simulated existence, of life in a hermetically sealed cultural system that perhaps inevitably must deteriorate into self-consuming parody. Socart, a form of conceptualism, took as its subject the quotidian aspects of Soviet daily life. In a manner similar to American pop art, which ironically appropriated the signs and cliches of commercial culture so as to critique their cultural dominance, soc artists reacted to the "advertising" of socialism," Ellen Berry, "Afterword: Postmodernism East and West," 344.

[31] The slogan of Soviet propaganda.

[32] The dinosaurs' deadly stare in Kovalov's film and in socart painting may be also discussed in the context of Paul Coates' book, *The Gorgon's Gaze: German Cinema, Expressionism, and the Image of Horror* (Cambridge, 1991). Interestingly, in Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* and *The Lost World,* the dinosaur-theme may be discussed in the context of the ritual's dissociative law, emphasized by Turner. They also represent the projected unconscious social and historical fears. The dragons of the two last commercial movies may be also regarded as objectivization and visualization of the profound unconscious horrors of Holocaust, still unexhausted in *Shindler's List* and required to be addressed.

[33] On late-Soviet necrorealism, see Ellen Berry and and Anesa Miller-Pogasar, "A Shock Therapy of the Social Consciousness: The Nature and Cultural Function of Russian Necrorealism." *Cultural Critique* 34 (Fall 1996).

[34] Creating catalogs, enumerations, lists and dictionaries—"genres of the infinite" is, according to Kuritsyn, a characteristic feature of postmodern text. An all-encompassing list of objects in the environment "rhythmically, has no limits. Objects on such a list are material to the point of being completely cleansed of their materiality... The list is interested only in prolonging itself, supporting its rhythm and being disseminated. A list... is infinite, and a specific object yearns for absence, since after all, any numerator given infinity in the denominator meeans nothing. As a result even the rhythm disappeares, insofar as there is no unit, range, or scale relative to which it might manifest itself. in this perspective, the list becomes pure energy, the naked, unmaterialized stuff of the spirit," Kuritsyn, "Postmodernism: the New Primitive Culture," 59. In this context, the focused nature of metasemantic montage and *semantic investigation* becomes more clear as alternative kind of semantic experimentation in contrast to creating the *lists, catalogs,* as infinite procedures of conceptual art. From this perspective, *Scorpion's Gardens* may be

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defined as a stage in the development from abstract 'catalogization' to 'semantic investigation'—the next stage in post-Soviet conceptual art. In this chapter I intentionally did not touch upon the very complex issue as to how the structures of semantic investigation and semantic drama relate to postmodernism. This topic deserves special analysis. In short, it is possible to say that as forms of conceptualism, they are indeed an integral part of the postmodern landscape—of the so-called postmodern condition—as a macro-cultural process. However, with regards to the aesthetics or style of postmodernism, they contradict the very basics of postmodern artistic structure, which intentionally ignores or even tends to disintegrate the catharsis. There can be no answers and no discharge in the postmodern structure. While the semantic catharsis is a necessary stage of semantic drama, as well as the resolution, discovery, finding the 'truth' or problem solving are essential features of semantic investigation as the intellectual and axiological quest, or say a "sacred journey" in the age of postmodernism, in terms of cultural anthropology.

[35] Lotman, "The Text within the Text," 378.

[36] An important notion of film as a drama, which has been missing in film theory, has been recently emphasized by Armes in his very topical book *Action and Image: Dramatic Structure in Cinema.*

[37] For more on semantic hierarchies in the structure of the artistic text, see Lotman, "The Text within the Text."

[38] See Linda Hutcheon, *Narcissic Narrative: Metafictional Paradox*.

[39] Ibid., 87.

[40] The very concept of semantic investigation introduced in this chapter corresponds with the ritual semantics of the riddle. Eisenstein, in his semiotic anthropology of cinema, formulates the role of riddles in the archaic cultures, stressing their importance for what can be called discourse metacommunication-the ritual exchange of texts in the archaic societies. Both, Eisenstein and Ivanov emphasize the ritual meaning of the riddle in the wide context of cinema studies: "Religious practice is a complex system of metaphorical manifestations of the unpronounced mystery of the spirit (of a given cult), which had to be represented in a symbolic form to make it incomprehensible for the uninitiated." Ivanov, *Essays in the History of Semiotics in the USSR,* 91.

[41] From the perspective of semiotic-anthropological approach toward cinema, it is interesting to point out that the four stages of the *semantic investigation* discussed in this chapter, correspond with semantic phases of the ritual process. Most probably, both models reflect the very process of re-signification, or re-orientation of the individual within the ideological and axiological fields.

[42] Lotman, "The Text within the Text," 379.

[43] One of the most important tasks of new post-Soviet art, according to Berry, is "to demythologize the psychocultural legacy of Stalinism" and to recognize "that old ideological structures remain strongly embedded in the collective psyche," Ellen Berry, "Afterword: Postmodernism East and West," 338. However, following Kovalov, it is important to stress that his film is not only a mockery of the totalitarian

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regime: "We all are connected with this time. The older you are, the more you understand how deeply, in fact, you are connected with the past... I wanted to make a sunny film, like a light of sun—there is a white color, but also all the colors of rainbow... I wanted to show different aspects of film documentary. It should become a living substance. A great film is the one that allows to be viewed from different perspectives... And I wanted to make such a composite polyphonic film, which would have many layers... I wanted to make my film not a thing made, but a living organism." Interview with Oleg Kovalov, Publications of the 1992 Berlin International Film Festival.

[44] In conclusion to this chapter, other recent experimental works by Kovalov should be mentioned. *The Island of the Dead,* a film about Russian silent cinema, was reviewed by Nea Zorkaia, one of the leading ex-Soviet film critics. Rephrasing the term "Kuleshov effect," she introduced the concept "Kovalov effect" as a development of highly controversial montage. Zorkaia stressed that "there is nothing incompatible" for Kovalov in the realm of cinema. See her "Kovalov Effect," *Iskusstvo kino* 9 (September 1993), 40. Another film by Kovalov, *Concert for the Rat* is a cinematic interpretation of stories by Daniil Kharms, the remarkable Soviet writer-absurdist of Jewish origin, who died in Stalin's prison in 1937. Although I am very enthusiastic about translating Kharm's antitotalitarian "demonic realism" (in Lary's terms) into the language of cinema, I do not consider it a successful experiment. In his latest work, Kovalov turned from the montage cinema and, I believe, fell into the trap of pseudonarrativity that he was trying to destroy in *Scorpion's Gardens.* He transformed Kharms' dark, playful and grotesque antinarrative mosaic (Kafkian tales with sharp humor) into a surrealist cinematic "bad dream story." Kharms is an extremely important figure for post-Soviet culture; he raised sarcastic antinarrativity to the height of metacultural discourse. His absurd jokes have become an essential part of the Soviet antitotalitarian cultural landscape, even for everyday conversational Russian language. Often, it is only by quotations from Kharms' absurd texts (post)Soviet people find a way to adequately express what they think and see around them. In my view, compared to the recent work by Kovalov, Kharms' world was more adequately re-created in a brilliant cinematic form by a young Austrian filmmaker Michael Kreihsl, *Charms' Incidents* (1996) (see Publications of the 1996 Toronto International Film Festival). His film is a more successful match with Kharms' phantasmagorias than Kovalov's because Kreihsl naturally blended Kharms with Western cultural tradition. German Romanticism, expressionism, Kafka and naive clownery of the *Mr. Bean*-type were stylistically integrated by Kreihsl, creating a fascinating tragicomic model of totalitarian absurdity and locating the archetypal ritual fool in the midst of this metacultural Universe. Kreihsl interprets Kharms via Chaplin, while Kovalov does it via Bunuel. Kreihsl's grotesque approach toward the modeling of a Soviet kafka's absurdist world seems to be a true artistic revelation, and more profound achievement than the surrealist way of Kovalov. It is childish humor, not desperation which makes Kharms' grotesques in the Austrian version more horrifying. It should be remembered however, that *Scorpion's Gardens* was made in the beginning of the post-Soviet era, while Kovalov's most recent "nightmare aesthetics" in *Concert for the Rat* reflects the

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post-Soviet atmosphere of cultural exhaustion and depression. One can say that Kreihsl successfully integrated the world of a Soviet kafka into the metadiscourse of Western culture, while Kovalov kept him inside the ruins of St.Petersburg and Russian surrealist tradition. On the aesthetics of nightmare in Russian film, see my "Deviltry: Delirium as Aesthetic Category," *Iskusstvo Leningrada* 6 (June 1991).

[45] This section of the thesis (the study of *Prison Romance*) was presented at the convention of American Association for the Advancement for Slavic Studies, Boston, November 16, 1996.

[46] *Prison Romance* (*Tyuremnyi romans*), "Tabivi-film" with participation of "Lenfilm" studio. 1993. Script by Sergei Soloviev (himself a well-known director of postmodern movies), photography by Pavel Lebeshev, a renowned *poet of camera,* one of the most brilliant Russian directors of photography), music by Sergei Kurekhin, a famous postmodern composer, starring: actress Marina Neelova (Odry Hepbern/Holly Hunter type) as Elena Shemelova and Alexandr Abdulov (Richard Gere type) as Lev Artynov—two charismatic Russian film stars. This is quite a team; however, it is a little bit too sophisticated for a main stream movie, even for the *magnum opus* of mass art. This film was recommended to me by the clerk at the Russian videostore in Toronto, in November 1996 as a 'blockbuster' among the immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Because of the film's poor technical quality, it hasn't had a commercial release on Western screens, but is available at any Russian videorental place in the most of big North American cities.

[47] Or in Russian terms, "*strasti rokovye*", "*razvesistaya klukva*", "*lapsha na ushi,*" which means in English "the branchy cranberry", "fatal passions", "macaroni hanging from the ears"—Russian slang expressions, equivalent to "pulp fiction" and meaning "kitsch, trash, soap, a cheap lie" regarding a statement, utterance or a narrative.

[48] *Klub vesevykh i nahodchivykh* (The Club of Merry and Quick-Witted)—a competition in humor and resourcefulness among young professionals, students and young scholars. It was an extremely popular TV show in the USSR, in the 1960s-early 1970s, as one of the few sources of free laughter and political satire in Soviet culture. It was forced into nonexistence in the beginning of Stagnation.

[49] In addition to *Prison Romance,* the fictionalized account, a docudrama was made in 1996 because of the unexhausted public interest in the real story, and its possible cultural interpretations. The title of the documentary in Russian is *Ne vidala goria - poliubi menia* (If You Have Not Been in Trouble, Fall in Love with Me), director, Olga Budashevskaia, production: Russia and Great Britain. In the West, the documentary film was released under the title, *The Crime of the Wolf.* With the actual characters, who vanished in the Soviet jail system, the docudrama contained pictures of real people and a real camp, and also an element of performance: unknown actors acted for the real participants. The documentary used true records of the investigation, her and his stories narrated by each of the lovers. Both the real story and the documentary both had an emotional and shocking effect on public and have been widely discussed in the media.

[50] See Kirby Farrell, "Making a Killing in Post-Traumatic *True Romance*" in *Pictures of a Generation on*

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*Hold*, ed. Murray Pomerance and John Sakeris (Toronto, 1996).

[51] *Lubov' Iarovaia* is a classical Soviet drama about an educated woman, who was on the side of the Red (communists) in the Civil War. In spite of her own suffering and following her political ideas, she gave away her beloved husband to be shot, because he was on the opposite side of the war—the White (anticommunist army). *Sorok Pervyi* (The Forty First) is another classical story by B. Lavrenev about a young proletarian girl, a Red Army soldier, who had to guard a young soldier of the White Army, a University student on an isolated island. They fell in love, but she finally shot him thinking that he was trying to escape. The title means that her true love was the forty first enemy killed by her in the fire of war. A famous movie has been made on this story in the years of Thaw by a prominent filmmaker G. Chukhrai (also a director of (*Ballad of a Soldier*). *The Notes of the Gray Wolf*, a novel by Akhto Levi depicted in first person the life and thoughts of an intelligent thief in the years of Stagnation. The protagonist, portrayed with sympathy, had brains and a soul. His perspective on the life of Soviet society was unusual and had a hidden dissident meaning. With an adventurous plot, love story and political connotations, this novel, published in one of the leading Moscow literary journals, had enormous success among readers.

[52] Shneidman's definition of the cultural agenda of (ex)Soviet postmodernism is especially relevant to the problematic of *Prison Romance*: "In postmodern art, irony is usually radical, comedy is absurd, and humor is black. There is a fusion of forms, and a confusion of realms—a combination of facts and fiction... The world described is not hierarchical but fragmented, and in a state of anarchy... metaphor is displaced by metonymy. Postmodernism... denies the very ideas of reality and truth, and elevates relativism into an end in itself." N.N. Shneidman, *Russian Literature 1988-1994: the End of an Era* (Toronto, 1995), 172-73.

[53] It is notably ironic, in the context of problems discussed in this paper, that Sergei Solov'ev—a well-known Russian filmmaker, an author of the idea and scriptwriter of *Prison Romance*—has had recently to publicly admit to his own corruption (or crime?). He managed to receive a large amount of money from the Russian government (millions of dollars) for making two megamovies—one was supposed to be a new version of *Anna Karenina* and another based on the works of Turgenev. Solov'ev, in Karakhan's words, "cynically apologized for wasting all this money without even shooting one shot." From the presentation of Lev Karakhan, a vice editor-in-chief of the leading Russian film journal *Iskusstvo kino*, at the convention of the American Association for the Advancement for Slavic Studies, Boston, 14-17 November, 1996. Needless to say, no investigation was initiated on this matter, as no 'crime' was committed, according to the new standards of post-Soviet society. The degree of authors' identification with the hero in the film under discussion is truly 'archetypal' and profoundly ironic.

[54] For more on the archetype of holy fool and its ritual as well as semantic (meaning-making) role in Russian culture, see my "Towards the Anthropology of *Yurodivost.*"

[55] For more on postmodernism and the issues of Russian history, see my "Find the Magic Word."

[56] The sociological research "Fear of Success" was introduced at 1996 AAASS Annual convention in

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Boston. Is an interesting illustration of this problem. An original survey in the tradition of symbolic interaction, it was undertaken to explore the image/meaning of businessman in contemporary Russian mass consciousness. The characteristic qualities of the businessman were given by the majority of the participants as 'greedy', 'immoral', 'dangerous', etc. In other words, it was precisely the same set of adjectives given in this paper to the main hero, manifesting the system of meanings of *Prison Romance* as a cultural model. Boston, 14-17 November, 1996, the panel "From the Soviet to Post-Soviet Man." Another interesting evidence of current socio-cultural processes in Russia and status of the new class coming into being was presented by the leading Russian sociologist Yury Levada at the same convention. His recent sociological survey explored the levels of anxiety and fear among various groups of Russian population. The most fearful, unconfident and neurotic group in society turned out to be the richest—businessmen, according to Levada's research. One may speculate that the reasons for this phenomenon are generated by the paradoxical historical condition—a transformation of socialist society into the 'wild', 'early capitalism' and as a result—the intolerance of the society, the cultural biases (both internal and external) against private property and enterprise, their means and ends, as well as the most important factor—unpredictability of the state economic regulations.

[57] The image-symbols of classical Russian literature: Katiusha Maslova—a Tolstoyan heroine from his novel *Resurrection*—a young poor girl who was wrongly accused and suffered in the pre-revolutionary Russian prison; Porphyry Petrovich—a sarcastic and sophisticated male investigator from Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment,* a senior police officer, who psychologically tortured the suspect Raskolnikov during his murder investigation.

[58] Classical Russian novels and stories: *War and Piece*, a novel by Lev Tolstoy, *Sunstroke* , a story by Ivan Bunin, *Lady with the Pet Dog*, a story by Anton Chekhov, *Wandering in Torments*, a novel by Alexei Tolstoy, *Doctor Zhivago,* a novel by Boris Pasternak.

[59] *A byl li mal'chik?*—is a Russian cultural idiom meaning "was there a boy?" This expression came from the novel *The Life of Klim Samgin,* where the selfish protagonist in his teen years did not help a drowning boy; he cowardly ran away and let the boy vanish in the cold water. For the rest of his life he tried to forget this episode, asking himself "was there a boy?"—meanng if this episode ever really took place, trying to replace reality with simulacrum. *The Life of Klim Samgin* written in the 1930s by a disappointed Gorky may be considered one of the first examples of Soviet literary postmodernism.

[60] A Brazilian soap opera, about a young educated mulatto girl, Izaura, who suffered in slavery in the nineteenth century, shown on Soviet TV in the 1990s. It had an enormous success among the public for obvious reasons: everyone in the *glasnost* years in the former Soviet Union could identify him/herself with a slave.

[61] See, Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance* and other works by Turner.

[62] *"Napravo poides—konia poteryaesh, nalevo poidesh—golovy lishishsia."*

# Chapter VIII. Ritual Death-Rebirth in the films by Tarkovsky: *Andrei Roublev*

> **I feel more and more that the principles of unity (in the name of wholeness) are of supreme importance in cinema; perhaps, more so than in any other art.**
>
> **Andrei Tarkovsky**
> ***Time Within Time*, 71**

For the polyphonic richness of his works, the artistic world of Andrei Tarkovsky (1932-1986) may be discussed in many different ways: as a fugue, it simultaneously develops diverse motifs and contains divergent interpretations. The analysis of *Andrei Roublev* in this thesis focuses on two selected and interrelated themes—the manifestation of the Collective Body and the ritual death-rebirth. The cinema of Tarkovsky has been often called "philosophical," and he was considered a thinker rather than an entertainer. His 'philosophical system,' expressed in a cinematic form within the integral content of all his films, became a manifestation of his thought as a philosopher. It is no surprise that Tarkovsky, a Russian thinker, followed to a great extent Russian philosophical tradition. As was mentioned above, reflections on the idea of Unity have played a key role in this tradition over the centuries. As the films of Tarkovsky show, following Florensky, Fedorov, Vernadsky and Bakhtin, the director expressed in cinematic form the ideas associated with Russian Cosmism and Organicism. However, the lessons of Russian history, that of a troubled and manipulated society, in which social inquires were compromised by twentieth century ideological controversies, made any thinker to reconsider the ways and meanings of collectivism, of the Total-Unity (Vseedinstvo), in Solovi'ev's terms). The test of the idea of Unity and the search for the new Unity in its vital form and its ultimate meaning is the new cultural condition of post-Stalinist Russia and the spiritual goal of the films by Tarkovsky, especially his main masterpiece, *Andrei Roublev*. (The film's original and very meaningful title, *Passion for Andrei,* which referred to the polyphonism of Bach's religious music, was prohibited by censorship).

## *Andrei Roublev*

Wandering around medieval Russia, which can be seen in the film as a mythological beginning of the Russian nation, the hero attempts to make meaning of his encounters on the road and to make sense of the common notions of the people—love, faith, nation, art, envy, betrayal, death, brotherhood, unity, etc. From this standpoint, *Andrei Roublev* may be considered a ritual action: 1) a (re)collecting of the Collective Body—a possible vital unity on the ruins of national loyalty and decency—by the main protagonist; and 2) creating a semiosphere on the ruins of the Stalinist empire—a new vital system of meanings for post-totalitarian culture.

*Andrei Roublev,* a high point of Soviet post-war cinema, was the most famous prohibited film in Soviet, or possibly in world, cinema. Made in 1966, it was immediately 'shelved' by the censors in the Soviet Union, first shown in Cannes in 1969 and officially released at home only in 1971. However, whether prohibited or released, but seen by every filmmaker, *Andrei Roublev* was the cinematic work which has most profoundly influenced Soviet cinema art and Russian culture in general. The script was written in 1962-63 by two artists, two Andreis—the directors Tarkovsky and Konchalovsky—a detail which leads us to the issues of *ritual naming* and *matrix identity* within the ritual process.[1] The main masterpiece of Tarkovsky, a three-and-a-half-hour epic, *Andrei Roublev* narrates a story of Russia's greatest artists, and at the same time represents an archetypal form of ritual journey. The film metatextually reflects also later medieval forms of sacred journey, an old Russia's Christian genre of *stranstviia, khozhdeniia,* the stories of wandering, nomadic parables, closely associated with the religious revelation. In modern film culture, these traditional narrative forms originated a popular genre of the road movie. With a variety of diverse characters, unpredictable events and sharp conflicts that the genre allows to unfold, this archetypal narrative travel retains to a great extent the symbolic meaning of a spiritual journey. In the latter, the mutual reflections of the external and internal image-meanings (physical movement in time/space intertwined with inner monologue and psychological process) compose a paradoxical dual narrative reality. In *Andrei Roublev,* Tarkovsky integrated all the above-mentioned historical forms and artistic modes, keeping symbolic references to all levels of narrative structure—from the initial ritual-narrative paradigm to medieval wanderings, nomadic stories, and from the travel genre of Russian literary classics to twentieth-century Chaplinesque-Felliniesque road movie.[2] The road motifs of Kurosawa, with ongoing elementa of mud and rain, were acknowledged by Tarkovsky to be one of the sources for his metaphorical imagery.

As is typical for the road cinema/literature, stories represent a narrative chain, a whole; however, each of them also manifests a separate 'narrative universe', and can be analyzed from a variety of angles. The films of Tarkovsky are true cinematic fugues and can be defined in Bakhtin's terms as polyphony and they allow simultaneous diverse non-contradictory interpretations in the numerous variety of contexts.[3] Episodes of *Andrei Roublev* have such rich and profound anthropological connotations within the perspective of the anthropology of cinema that each story deserves to be a focal point of separate study. Due to the limited space of one chapter, I will focus on the ritual dimensions of the embedded stories. Each episode, as well as the whole composition, will be discussed from two interrelated perspectives: the Collective Body and the ritual death-rebirth. The Collective Body will be shown to be manifested through the ritual death-rebirth and other forms and meanings in each segment of *Andrei Roublev.*

The film's setting is the empty landscapes of fifteenth-century Russia, devastated by three centuries of Tartar occupation and internecine feuding between the princes—truly the most dark period of Russian medieval history. It is a country of famine, beggars and wanderers, with the impoverished people—serfs—without rights and possessions. The film's protagonist is a great Russian icon-painter—a Leonardo-da-Vinci-of Russian cultural Renaissance, a creator of unique, sophisticated and humanistic style of Russian religious art. The hero is shown in constant motion, transition: in order to create, Roublev had to walk from church to church along the endless impassable roads of ancient Russia.

The movement both physical and spiritual becomes a root-metaphor for the entire film. Whatever Roublev witnesses and experiences on his boundless routes—whether it is good or evil—he transforms into the sacred wisdom and beauty of art. Thus the artist is presented in the film as a *ritual figure*, a *transformative agent* of the cultural process.

***The Flight*** seemingly has nothing to do with the film's syntagmatic level—the journey of Andrei Roublev.[4] However, a short story preceding the film's narrative frames—a cinematic prologue or epigraph—metaphorically explains the film as a whole, as a symbolic spiritual journey. A serf is running upstairs in a church (the tallest building in medieval Russia) to reach the roof before his followers catch him. The man has made a balloon, his friends on the ground are trying to inflate it. With the screams "burn them alive!" an angry crowd is running after the man. He jumps from the roof and flies. His flight, shot from the high perspective and depicted as a never-ending spiritual bliss of flying, suddenly ends in his fall and death. His descent is shown from the perspective of the 'sky'—as the terrifyingly swift approach of the earth's giant body which devours the flying man. His death is echoed in the fallen body of the horse, rolling on its back in slow motion, as if defeated by gravity, agonizing in its inability to stand up and run.

Historians criticized Tarkovsky for the showing the invention of the balloon by a fifteenth-century Russian peasant. They misinterpreted this purely metaphorical episode, a poetic parable, which has more to do with the symbolic idea of flight than a historic event. However, the confusion on the part of historians can be explained: Russian film (especially Stalinist totalitarian cinema) before Tarkovsky had not known such rough and down-to-earth naturalism and physicality, which seemed to be a new radical realism. In spite of the film's striking naturalistic texture, the images of *Andrei Roublev* are of a metaphorical and philosophical nature. This discrepancy between the film's deep structure and its style caused a lot of confusion and misinterpretation of the film and its various images on the part of censors, critics and the public. Reality and dream, the external and internal visions, the physical and spiritual existence interlaced in the film in a complex and sophisticated manner. Sometimes the director emphasized a collision between the spiritual and physical worlds; in other cases, the hero's spiritual journey was shown in purely symbolic dimensions. *Andrei Roublev* can be said to represent simultaneously two opposite cinematic styles, both in their extremes: the extra-realistic physical-naturalistic cinema and the philosophical symbolic-metaphorical cinema. The integration of the extremes in a complex polyphonic and dynamic composition creates a style of *visual fugue.*[5]

*The Flight,* as a symbolic prologue, introduces this duality of style and points at both the symbolism of the sacred journey to be undertaken in the film-ritual by the *protagonist-author-spectator* and at the physicality of the fall and the earth—a tragic yet inevitable collision of dream and reality.[6] The aspects of metatextuality, chronotope and dramatism should be emphasized in the flight-episode, as a model of the entire film. It manifests the inter- and metatextual connections with the archetypal motif of flight, as an escape and spiritual journey, in the classic Russian culture (literature, poetry, painting) before and after Tarkovsky. For Soviet film art this episode became a 'mythological beginning,' opening a whole metatextual chain of symbolic flights in cinema.[7] The flight is framed in the composition by two other events preceded by the peasant running away from the crowd and followed by the balloonist's death. But in spite of the composition, it is the flying that remains the most lasting process and the focus of the scene. Time seems to stop or unfold from within when the man reaches the sky.[8] The realistic chronotope is magically altered, and the moment unfolds into a mysterious eternal dimension—that of Great Time—which opens to the serf in his ascent and creative aspiration. What happens before, or after, matters less than *walking in the air*—the very moment of flight that brings the man to the heavens. This is an example of Tarkovsky's *sculpting of time*—his unique ability to transform, mold and change the course and perception of time in cinema, deeply connected with his philosophical and spiritual quest via film as a ritual process.

The dramatism of the moment is expressed through the anger of the crowd—the danger to the serf to be accused of 'witchcraft' or 'sacrilege' and burned at the stake. The flight of the dreamer-inventor is a fragile and risky enterprise: this Russian Icarus is destined to collide with the earth and die anyway. Death awaits him after the divine moment of flying—a metaphor of overcoming, aspiration, symbolic rebirth. But interestingly, death is shown by Tarkovsky to await the man from both sides: there is no escape for Icarus from the roof of the church—either he steps ahead and crashes or turns back and is killed by the angry crowd. A transient moment of flight—a symbolic rebirth—inevitably ends up in death. From this perspective, 'realistic' for both medieval and Soviet social history, the brief moment of flight, unfolding beyond the time frames, paradoxically remains in the spectators' memory as a metaphorical eternity. Thus, the prologue signifies within the forthcoming narrative the perspectives of Big Moments and Great Time, pointing at the divine vision/panorama and the dimensions larger than a human life.

***The Buffoon*** (*Skomorokh,* or *The Jester, The Mummers* in other translations) is the first episode of the film narrative. The buffoon starts his show by appearing with his naked behind painted and ends by it hanging upside down from the ceiling.[9] With this explicit symbolic inversions—the dynamic ritual signifiers of the upside-down, the inside-out—the creators of this episode represented Bakhtin's carnival, Lotman's antiworld, Turner's liminality and Babcock's reversible world, anticipating as early as in the 1960s these important forthcoming concepts. The episode shows a performance of the wandering artist (jester, buffoon) for the peasants crowded in a neighbor's hut (with an interesting ethnographic and historic detail of the composition: men are enjoying the performance inside, while women and children are glued to the windows gazing curiously from the outside). The buffoon is short, bald but a full of energy—a *ball of fire*. His humor is 'adult'—'salty' and fearless, his performance is full of sexual jokes and dashing mockery of the rich and powerful.[10]

The Buffoon was performed by the actor-director Rolan Bykov—the Jewish father in *Commissar* and the future creator of *Scarecrow. Commissar* was shot at same time as *Andrei Roublev*; Bykov was also busy at this time making his first film as a director—the hilarious antistalinist parody *Aibolit-66.* According to Bykov's memoirs, which are trustworthy given how his potential as an independent director unfolded later, *The Buffoon* episode to a great extent was an artistic collaboration of the two directors. Bykov rigorously researched historical materials for his role. He came up with the idea of the sharp and intolerant first encounter between the buffoon and the monks, thus reinforcing from the beginning the underlying moral and ideological conflict of the entire film. Bykov pointed out to Tarkovsky that social relationships between monks and wandering performers in medieval Russia were comparable to those of the police and fugitives criminals in modern times. It was the glance of hatred and fear that the buffoon gave the monks. Andrei (Anatoly Solonitsyn) and his partners, Daniil (Nikolai Grin'ko) and Kiril (Ivan Lapikov), taking refuge from the rainstorm on their travel, showed up unexpectedly at a folk show. Favorites of the people, *skomorokhi* (wandering buffoons) were to a great extent outlaws at this time for their sharp social critique, fearless satire and closeness to folk rituals, which were considered pagan and anti-Christian. They represented the *voice* of the community rather than the state, and the unofficial folk culture rather than the official culture of the ruling class. The monks and buffoon, especially seen through the eyes of Andrei, a wandering artist himself, manifest various incompatible realities of the historical time: official and un(anti)official art, community rituals associated with the folk tradition and organized religion associated with the state, the oppressed and the oppressors, freedom and service, as well as opposite interpretations of the moral, good and evil. From this perspective, the monk's informing the authorities about the buffoon, which resulted in the death of the latter, is a revelation of the film's complex integral conflict.

Bykov completely altered the text of his role from that of the script and created an original spectacle of such authenticity and power that anthropologists can now study a Russian medieval performance from this scene. He persuaded Tarkovsky to get rid of stylization (humorous verses written for the film by a modern poet), and instead offered the director authentic medieval texts, which Bykov discovered for his role in the archives. Tarkovsky enthusiastically accepted new texts, even in spite of or because, they were full of folk obscenities, even though it could jeopardized the episode and make it unacceptable to the censors. (*Mat*—a popular obscene language which originated in ancient ritual formulas, inseparable from sexual folk humor and self-expression of the Russian man—was preserved by Tarkovsky in the episode hidden by special noise-effects in the 'hottest' moments)[11]. However, the new texts were authentic and gave an insight into folk culture and a storm of enthusiastic laughter among the medieval audience.

Bykov, who professionally studied dance as a part of his acting career, created a 'choreography' for the episode—*dance of the buffoon*—a combination of wild rhythms and hops—a shamanistic ritual dance rather than modern dancing.[12] According to Bykov's memoirs, he came up with movements of such intensity that three subsequent rehearsals of the episodes almost killed him. What Bykov and Tarkovsky attempted to accomplish (and succeeded!) in this scene was a restoration of the cathartic dance, a shamanistic ritual, which is a true root of the medieval buffoon performance. Russian *skomorokh*, the buffoon, represents one of the 'superparadigmatic' figures in ritual semantics—the carnival protagonist, the ritual fool who originates from the polysemantic ritual parent—the "Shaman-Trickster-Fool," in Grimes' definition.

Although in real life, Roublev became a monk later in his life, Tarkovsky made him a monk from his younger years in order to emphasize the ambivalence of the main hero's status and to present him as a carrier of socio-cultural oppositions. The monks, icon painters paradoxically represent the same and the opposite sides of the semantic map: they are poor, and they are the artists, painters, as well as the wanderers, ritual nomads—

exactly like the buffoon. All this unites them and makes Andrei and Daniil sympathetic to the buffoon. But they simultaneously represent the opposites—the buffoon is free, independent and critical, while the monks represent obligation and service, dependence on the religious authorities and conformity to those in power—the semantic oppositions, which vividly illustrate Turner's theory of structure-antistructure. The comparative table of ritual and religion in the Russian cultural tradition, presented in the first part of this thesis, clarifies the semantic map of the film's dramatic action. With all the ambivalence of the status of monk-icon-painter, only one of the three—Kiril—chooses to take the opposite side of the social, cultural and religious division from the folk crowd and reports on the buffoon. It was Kiril who whispered, entering the performance: "God made the priests but the devil made the buffoon," thus presenting a medieval understanding of the freedom of speech and the independence of the artists. Kiril quietly sneaks out of the hut in the middle of performance, while everyone else is engrossed and cannot see him leaving. Despite the rainstorm and dirty impassable roads, the dutiful law-abiding monk makes every effort to reach the authorities with his urgent information. Tarkovsky makes his 'betrayal' of the buffoon difficult to see: the film audience, exactly like the crowd in the peasant hut, is engaged by the cathartic dance and inevitably misses the monk's disappearance. The sudden arrival of the duke's soldiers shocks all the participants in the ritual performance. "Who was the informer?", remains the question for the audience on both sides of the screen (united by one ritual performance). But the film audience is left with the disturbing perplexity for the whole movie, understanding all the circumstances of the buffoon's capture only by the end of the film.

The Buffoon-Jester-Fool in all cultures is linked to a mystical symbolism of transformation, becoming and change. This meaning of the fool has been emphasized in all the works of Bakhtin and Turner. As a symbolic 'enigma', the fool also corresponds in psychoanalysis to the irrational, sublimation, blind impulse and the unconscious. As pointed out by Frazer, the Fool/Clown also plays the part of "scapegoat" in ritual sacrifices.[13] The Buffoon in *Andrei Roublev* can be seen as a representation of all the above mentioned interrelated meanings, manifesting within the film's narrative semantics one of many echo-protagonists of the main hero. The image-meaning of every episode's hero is applied and tested as a semantic projection onto the image of Roublev as a symbolic collective protagonist.

A film-ritual which ascends to the form of fugue can also be defined as a complex scenario of programmed intense emotions: ambivalent reactions and collisions of feelings facilitate altogether a multiple and multidimensional cathartic reaction. The carnival laughter and ecstasy of ritual performance is interrupted by violence. Without any warning, the director introduces the first shocking scene—the torture happens in front of the camera. The prince's guards, routinely and calmly, but with all their masculine power, smash the little buffoon against a tree and then leave the scene with his body, without saying a word to the silent crowd. The same body which just minutes ago created a cathartic dance of a unique intensity—(re)creating a universe around the magic center of the ritual circle—is now thrown like a lifeless bag across a horse's saddle and carried away. The ritual dance was broken off, but the motif of the Ritual Man, and his death and rebirth, receive further development and revelation in the film's finale.

Kiril represents the film's echo-antagonist as an opposition to the echo-protagonists like the Balloonist, Buffoon and Roublev. Although the role of Kiril has not been fully revealed in the first episode as one of the film's multiple antagonists, he becomes a focus of the director's scrupulous investigation in the following scenes. The subsequent episodes are united by the theme of Envy—a problem especially important in the context of the Collective Body. When Andrei, the youngest of the three painters, suddenly reveals a new great talent, it is disturbing to his once equal partners. It is frustrating and difficult to both Daniil and Kiril to accept their younger friend as a new authority. Their self-confidence is destroyed; they feel threatened and jealous. The revelation of the talent—the divine touch of Roublev's works—sends his both partners into a form of depression: Daniil becomes sad, silent and distant. To Andrei's disappointment, he refuses to work with him any more. Kiril becomes irritated, angry and vindictive. He expresses his anger towards everybody—Andrei, other monks and even his own dog, which Kiril violently beats. The two men's similar frustration because of their friend's growing talent and their own increasing inferiority complex, results in two completely opposite reactions—the constructive and destructive resolution of the powerful feeling of envy. Roublev's teacher, Daniil—a noble man—is finally capable of handling his jealousy feeling and restores his friendship-partnership with Andrei, accepting with dignity the new role of his assistant. Kiril, a vicious jealous man is unable to overcome his envy, breaks up their team and leaves the monastery.

The issue of envy and rivalry echoes the paradigmatic theme of spiritual death and rebirth: Kiril—the *uninitiated,* the artist without insight, incapable of communicating a sacred message—is shown as a man lost in the labyrinth—the Forest of jealousy—becoming symbolically dead. Daniil is capable of spiritual growth beyond his limits and is destined to rebirth—a new beginning. Envy functions in the plot as a form of *passage,* a catalyst of personal crisis, which leaves characters a choice between death and rebirth. Envy, as a form of symbolic death, is also a ritual test: one man passes the monsters of jealousy, while another perishes in the deep woods of his own dark feelings. 'Forgiving' Andrei for his God-given talent, Daniil becomes a new person, accepting a new role/status in the world and his former student-friend as a *messenger,* a carrier of the sacred wisdom; thus Daniil is shown to be initiated and reborn. The former instructor now learns from Andrei and creatively benefits from their collaboration. Kiril, on the other hand, ends up devastated and spiritually dead—becoming more and more spiteful and self-destructive. The issue of envy is an ongoing metatheme in the fugue of *Andrei Roublev*: it is shown as that very evil power which destroys the Collective Body from the inside. It is envy and rivalry that represent the most serious danger to brotherhood and unity. The Jealous Man is the source of all trouble in *Andrei Roublev*. As the antagonist in every conflict, The

Jealous Man replaces the external enemy—a traditional antagonist of Russian culture. The one who reports on the buffoon, condemns Andrei behind his back, beats his own dog and ruins the artistic is partnership is not a 'foreigner' or the 'social antagonist,' but a *brother*, an equal. He is an envious man, lacking self-confidence and self-respect and tortured by painful questions about his place in the world.[14] The same feeling of jealousy with its all-encompassing destructive power will be echoed in various episodes of the film: princes' rivalry, blinding the masons, destruction of Vladimir—the sacred Russian city and its sacred place of faith—the cathedral.

***Celebration*** (The Feast-Day), the next episode features the festival of Ivan Kupala—ancient Midsummer Night ritual (comparable to the Western St John's Eve), which Andrei and his partners happen to witness. Illegal in Christian Russia, Ivan Kupala was a sacred ritual deeply associated with the fertility cult of ancient Slavs. As in the case of many other ancient rituals, it was secretly performed by many Slavs, whose pagan ancestry *has not been forgotten*. It bears remembering that, from the viewpoint of ritual consciousness still wide-spread in medieval Russia, non-performance of a ritual negatively affects the virility of the people and fruits (The Collective Body), as well as the whole cosmology—sacred order of nature. Kupala means 'swimming, bathing' and represents the patron of fertility, ancient Slavic deity of the river. Like other pre-Christian rituals, it was prohibited during three centuries of forcible conversion, but widely celebrated because of its deep roots in the millenniums of Slavic pagan tradition.[15]

The ritual is shown in fragments, in pieces, as if it is lost, disintegrated and needs the film-ritual to restore its meaning and wholeness. It is seen from the distance (of space, of time, of misunderstanding?) and through the eyes of Andrei, who hides in the bushes. There are naked young men and women dancing around a fire in the darkness of night, laughing and running after each other in the woods, swimming in the river and making love. The never before seen picture of enchanting power is suddenly revealed to a shocked Andrei and his companions. The celebration manifests a degree of freedom, sensuality and joy unfamiliar to the monk. Suddenly a young beautiful woman appears: Andrei can see her naked body under a sheepskin (in many cultures a traditional ritual symbol of transition and channel to the beyond; animal skin as a body cover also is a symbolic ritual reference to birth and death). The woman kisses Andrei, thus initiating a ritual action and invites him to follow her. He experiences mixed feelings of incredible intensity—the call of sensuality as a young male, curiosity as a thinker, admiration for her beauty as an artist, a compassion for a free spirit and, at the same time, fear of transgression as a monk and condemnation, as a sincere Christian believer.

The men who celebrate Ivan Kupala catch Andrei, and fearing that a monk spies on them (a reference to the first episode) intend to kill him. Andrei has not yet realized that the performance of this ritual is a matter of life and death (in both a ritual and political sense) and that the lives of participants are at stake. A young woman frees him, and Andrei runs through the forest, hunting down by the fear of death and struggling with the desire to stay and join the celebrations. The scenes of Ivan Kupala ritual, something unique in Soviet cinema in its sensuality and manifestation of freedom, would inevitably remain in the spectators' memory as a wild fantasy or a manifestation of a subliminal desire—exactly as they would remain forever as a miraculous experience in the memory of Andrei. He spends the whole night running in the woods and returns to his partners only in the morning—exhausted, with torn clothes and a deep emotional impact on his entire life, as the one who has passed through a symbolic death-rebirth. What else happened to Andrei this magic midsummer night nobody would ever know, and he keeps silent, in spite of Daniil's questions and reproach that Andrei's disappearance is a bad influence on the students.

The pagan celebration, a Dionysian feast, was shown in *Andrei Roublev* from an unusual perspective: with the deep respect to a man's freedom (including sexual), very atypical for the ascetic and hypocritical Soviet culture. The pagan rituals, as all other events in the film, is shown from a polyphonic perspective. Thus, *The Buffoon* episode presented four point-of-views: that of the people who participate in the ritual performance, of the monks (observers), of Kiril (volunteer informer) and of the guards (representatives of political power). *Celebration* presents the same set of diverse angles, manifesting them in juxtaposition. The perspectives of the people-revelers and guards are shown to be opposite and mutually exclusive, while the position of the monks, icon-painters is ambivalent and open—and also suspicious to the folk people. In *Andrei Roublev,* it is the function of the protagonist—through his piercing gaze, the gaze of the cinema (in Green's words)—to focus our attention on each of the perspectives and unbridgeable gaps between them, and to integrate polar viewpoints in the course of the film into a new philosophy. This inclination towards polyphonic vision on the part of the protagonist is one of the film's most important ideas that will be developed through the various dimensions of film narrative and language and manifested in the finale as a communication of a sacred message.

As if the profound emotional experience of the midsummer night fertility ritual is not enough, the film hero (and film audience) awaits a new shock. The next day at dawn, the monks, heading down the river in a boat, witness the soldiers hunting down the participants of the pagan ritual. They catch a couple, and while the man is fighting the soldiers, the young woman tries to escape by swimming across the river. She is moving almost in front of the monks' boat and their widely open eyes. Her beautiful naked body and powerful strokes compose rhythmic movements that metaphorically unite her with the water, making her whole with the river's moving streams. This image points at the river as a natural source of fertility and its ritual symbol; it is the deity of the river who is a patron of the midsummer ritual and also the patron of future life. Andrei observes this episode from the center of the river, moving with its stream. The guards are seen from his viewpoint as distant little figures furiously running after naked people. The woman is passing by the boat crossing the composition of the shot in the diagonal movement (one of the most powerful in film art). She approaches the monks and disappears further and further from them, towards the other bank—like a dream, fantasy, illusion. The scene's spatial composition and Andrei's viewpoint are identified by the mis-en-scene paradoxically not with any of the characters, but with the River, as a ritual dynamic signifier.

The viewpoint of the monk-protagonist differs from the positions of both conflicting sides—the guard/soldiers (who are too cruel) and the revelers/participants in the ritual (who are the pagans). Andrei's 'inquiring' perspective is given in *Celebration* first from the midst of the woods (space, Forest, confusion, incomprehension, lack of wisdom, symbolic death) and finally from the midst of the river (time, movement, fertility, creativity, enlightening, rebirth), thus marking the hero's spiritual movement in the context of his 'narrative' immobility. Andrei does not participate in the action, but the conceptualization of his perspectives shows him to be undergoing a dynamic death-rebirth transformation in his understanding of things. This cinematic message is constructed by Tarkovsky on a subtle, purely metaphoric-symbolic level.

The episode of *Celebration* manifests the invisible but powerful presence of the mythological character. Kupala is the 'bathing god,' the *One Who is Bathing the People,* symbolizing a pre-Christian form of ritual initiation—'baptism'—in and by the river's waters. What is being celebrated is the god of the river which is the River itself.[16] It is a dual gender mythological image: the river is female in Russian language and folklore, while Ivan Kupala is a male god (compare with a similar pair of Slavic deities Rod and Rozhanitsia, the gods of kinship and birth-giving). In most world cultures the river is a "symbol of creative power both of nature and of time... it signifies fertility and the progressive irrigation of the soil."[17] In the ritual context, the river has a close connection to the Collective Body as a symbol of life continuation and the Great Time. In *Andrei Roublev,* the River represents fertility itself and the future; it is a nurturer of and provider for the Collective Body, who saves in its 'body of water', in the maternal womb, its own child—a young woman, a future mother of the "little creatures".

This powerful, deeply ritual and metaphoric episode intertwines together death, sexuality and birth in an ambivalent and strikingly symbolic moment. The dangers of death—to be killed by soldiers or to drawn in the river's streams—the nakedness and intimate closeness of the irresistibly beautiful female body to the camera, as well as her survival—rebirth in the river's motherly embrace—bring together in this scene the polyphonic symbolism of the Collective Body and the dynamics of its self-realization and survival. There are no actions and words in the representation of the protagonist. But although Andrei is silent in this episode, his perspective on the events is manifest as something larger than words themselves can express—something *beyond words*. His position is clarified by his final place in the dynamic composition: Andrei is moving *with the river*, as a *part of the river*, looking from the river's *ritual perspective* at the violent guards with condemnation and at the escaping woman with compassion. Moreover, the rhythm and angle of the episode imply that Andrei, as well as others in the boat, passionately desire this woman and also desire her survival. Both subliminal feelings experienced by the human beings in the boat symbolize life and life continuation. The woman's diving under the boat metaphorically represents a sexual act and simultaneously a death-rebirth. Devouring the swimming naked body with their eyes, the monks symbolically make love to her and make efforts to help her to escape (the same kind of muscular movements fans make at sport events—an emotional—physical identification/co-action). The woman is moving closer and closer to the monks, then passes them by, swimming farther and farther from them never touched, never taken but saved. This encounter-avoidance in the middle of the river symbolizes the ambivalent status of the characters in the boat (and the protagonist) in respect to the Collective Body as the males, and the monks. As males they are connected to (pro)creative power; as monks they are disconnected from it, while potentially re-connected on another level as religious meditators and sacred instructors. This symbolic copulation-saving in the river/by the river, with and by the males sitting in a boat, has tremendous and subliminal power—that of the forbidden but all-compassing desire for the woman, a part of nature—desire to have her and to save her at the same time. More so than Andrei's encounter in the wood with the young seductress (called a "witch" by the Western critics, and a "pagan beauty", by the Soviet film scholars), the episode on the river is the erotic high point of the whole film. The message of *Celebration* as a ritual, its revelation, unites all the controversial and ambivalent feelings of the episode in subliminal metaphorical identification of the protagonist with the river, its power, its ritual agenda and its association with the Collective Body. The meanings-images of *Celebration*—the feast, the couples of revelers, the woman and the river are all dynamic signifiers of the Collective Body. *Celebration* leaves Andrei and the audience feeling as if the have gone through the ritual rebirth—initiated, healed and inspired by some wild heathen creative powers of nature which are beyond our understanding. With no parable at the end—no coherent conclusion of this ritual experience could be made from the perspectives of religion, state or civilization—*Celebration* remains a positive emotional high point of the first part and unforgettable experience of the protagonist.

***The Last Judgment.*** One thing is clear now to Andrei: his faith has grown faith in the powers of human beings, in the creative and profound meaning of their lives. And this position, now even stronger and empowered by new experiences, is predestined to collide with his obligations and duties as an official religious painter (ideologue, representative of the official culture, a tool for social suppression, a director of ceremonies—a shaman/initiator who leads people only to the point of the ritual death and leaves them there to suffer, without showing the way out toward the ritual rebirth)—this set of conflicts will be addressed and unfolded in the next powerful episode—*The Last Judgment.* The eroticism of *Celebration* with its intense cathartic experiences prepares for the further sharp piercing experiences of *The Last Judgment,* and simultaneously makes the forthcoming pain and tortures even more unthinkable and unbearable for the audience. Thus, Tarkovsky builds the whole film as a roller-coster of high and opposite emotions, which reinforce and simultaneously collide with each other. He frees the spectators' deep emotions and thoughtfully directs them in often opposite directions, thus producing a collision of the opposite feelings and their cathartic discharge over the course of the film.

Andrei's frustration with his assignment and the antihuman ideology of the picture he had to create (destructive towards the Collective Body) slowly grows into a decision not to fulfill his obligations and not to depict "The Last Judgment" on the wall of the cathedral in the way the authorities order him. This situation is strikingly reminiscent of a situation of a Soviet artist/writer, who would refuse to produce a conformist work for the sake of the totalitarian regime, thus risking his whole career and often his life. The political historical connotations of this episode are especially vivid; however, we are especially interested in the ritual aspects of this part. Roublev's decision, which the political and religious authorities find irritating, is influenced by two factors. The first embraces all Andrei's past intense emotional experiences and his new, more complex identification-compassion with and faith in people. The second is a product of his intense philosophical quest, which has been represented by Andrei's dialogues with Theophannes the Greek—the second great Russian icon painter, an elder artist who supported Andrei's unique talent and became his friend. Their dialogues, first in reality and later as imaginary debates (as dreams and visions) continuing in Andrei's mind after Theophannes's death, represent the film's 'intellectual script'. The dialogues reveal in an open, verbal form a possible conceptualization of reality by the two famous artists and medieval thinkers. In the first part of the movie, it is old Theophannes who is bitter, cynical and disappointed; Tarkovsky shows him shouting curses to the executioners, unable to take any more executions routinely performed right in front of his studio on the city square (a background of medieval art). Andrei, young, educated and well articulate (which is another surprise for the audience, who are used to the always silent monk) is, on the contrary, optimistic and full of faith in the good nature of people.

It is all of the above, the philosophical deliberations and emotional experiences, that brought Andrei to the dangerous decision not to depict *The Last Judgment* in the new important cathedral—a designated *sacred place*—as it was ordered by the authorities—purely as an intimidating representation of hell, full of unbearable, yet inevitable, tortures. The conflict in the interpretation of *The Last Judgment* in *Andrei Roublev* is very important in terms of ideology, religion, morality and culture. Manipulation with fear has always been one of the most effective mechanisms of social control by all governments in all cultural epochs. The authorities of the Russian medieval state were not different, but Andrei Roublev—following Andrei Tarkovsky—questions the legitimacy of this ancient device of social control. Soviet official culture had always effectively portrayed the horrors of the outside space and time—both of pre-revolutionary time and contemporary capitalist societies—and the despair, torture and pain of life outside the sacred borders of the caring Soviet Motherland. The disobedient, those who cross the borders of the permitted space and social roles were implied to be inevitably tortured, whether in the prisons /camps, or in the ruthless capitalist society. The politicians of medieval Russia, together with Church authorities, who were closely associated with the state, had exactly the same ways of reminding the people of submission—by frightening them on a regular basis with the horrifying scenes of hell (ceremonial re-presentation of symbolic death) picturing unavoidable pain in the afterlife for the disobedient. In other words, Roublev refused to depict (thus ritually, more exactly ceremonially) to re-present symbolic death, thus reinforcing the ruling class ideology and the domain of infertile death vs. rebirth and transformation. Whether The Last Judgment, as a cultural symbol, is associated with death or rebirth becomes one of the philosophical and spiritual conflicts of the film. Re-presenting death for the sake of ideology—was the way of the official art which Andrei could not accept as his own, and his conscience could not allow him to use his talent for antihuman political ends. He did not want to be a tool of ideology and to participate in brainwashing frightening into submission the people of his country he loved and respected.

In terms of ritual symbolism, this conflict can be interpreted as the counterpoint of the conception of ritual death with the conception of death-rebirth. "The Last Judgment" is a representation of symbolic death, and its origin is obviously of ritual nature (adopted by a Christian religion). "The Last Judgment' is a late religious symbol of the symbolic ritual death, the betwixt and between zone. In Christianity, it is a moral evaluation of one's life that would be crucial for one's possible rebirth. The alternative is meant to be even worse than death itself—eternal torture and suffering. The depiction of the latter, as an everyday reminder of the inevitable for those who do not want to submit to the only available status of serf, has an explosive meaning for interpreting Russian social and intellectual history. Dismembering, dissociation and pain had to be shown as the final and only destination rather than a pre-condition for re-integration, healing and revival on a new level. But there are no vacant 'other levels' and no optional places for development and change in the rigid, highly structured social organization that was coming into being in fifteenth-century Russia, symbolizing at the same time the regime in which Tarkovsky lived.

There was no place for rebirth in the ritual iconic representation of both life or afterlife, which Andrei could not accept and agree. This elimination of hope, growth and transformation, associated with the ritual symbol of rebirth and the emphasis on all forms of ritual death and intimidation, characteristic for oppressive regimes and (proto)totalitarian states, become a conflict in this important part of Tarkovsky's film. The theme of inseparability of the political and moral is further developed in the next episodes. While Andrei is in the limbo, hesitant to fulfill the assignment of drawing hell and gathering the resolve to give up the politically important project, he suddenly becomes a symbolic witness—again a silent bystander—of *hell on earth.* Unimaginable cruelty and pain, rather than imaginary and symbolic torture, occurs in the real world around the people with whom Andrei lives and works.

Both the Grand Prince and his younger rival-brother are played by the same actor, Yuri Nazarov (who twenty years later performed the Father in *Little Vera*).[18] In terms of the semantics of typage (developed by Meierkhold and Eisenstein in the 1920-30s), the actor's psychological type is highly meaningful for the integral message of the filmtext. The appearance of Bykov (the Buffoon, the Musician in *Scarecrow,* the Jewish Father) carries some alien features of a man "not from this world," while the look of Nazarov (Russian Princes, Soldier in *Mirror*, Vera's Father) represents the typical Russian man—one of "ours," easily identifiable appearance of a down-to-earth "nice Russian guy next door." This quality and especially the same face (identity) of the two enemy-brothers bring out the underlying symbolism of Russia's *rodovoe telo* and points at the deep conflict within the Collective Body.[19] Nazarov's dual role of the two brothers in *Andrei Roublev* has a special significance in terms of the symbolism of the Collective Body and its matrix identity. He plays two fictional characters, two different people simultaneously—the enemy princes, the Grand Duke and his twin brother—"evil twins" of the politics, and also two identical yet deadly fighting parts of the Collective Body.[20]

The rivalry between the two brothers, two main political forces has caused a lot of trouble for the entire country, weakening it for the Tartar invasions. For the sake of devastated Russia the head of the Russian church forces the brothers to agree to a ritual reconciliation in a special religious procedure to take place in the sacred religious site, the cathedral. But during the service, when brothers are dutifully standing in front of the patriarch listening religious verses meant to unite them in the word and name of God, the elder brother steps on the younger brother's feet and remains this way for the rest of the ceremony. Having no respect for the procedure, the elder brother-twin again humiliated the younger one, making sure that they both understand who is the boss, the true power.

The 'sacred ritual' designed by the highest official religious authority, as well as the very power of organized religion in medieval Russia, turns out to be false, useless and profane (see the section on the ritual and religion in Part I). The "Reconciliation" was a ceremony indeed, in Turner's terms, rather than a true ritual capable of bridging the gap and making a change in society. The religious procedure signified the appearance of the event rather its essence, while underneath, in reality, the hostility and breach between the brothers was only increasing. Ironically, the ersatz-ritual brought only more pain instead of catharsis to the troubled history of bad blood between the prince-brothers. The false reconciliation, given as a flashback of the younger prince's memory between *The Blinding* and *The Raid* episodes, explains and unites the logic of narrative composition.

The setting of the episode *The Last Judgment* takes place in the heart of medieval Russia—it ancient capital and sacred religious centre—the city of Vladimir.[21] Andrei is honored with an exclusive and important mission to re-arrange the sacred ritual place—to paint the new cathedral of the capital city; his host, patron and employer is the elder brother, the Grand Prince of Vladimir. Surrounding Andrei and his team, the Prince's children, servants and craftsmen, who decorate the ruler's palace, come and go, making a seemingly peaceful and friendly working environment. Two teams of workers—the monks, icon-painters and the group of craftsmen—represent Turner's *communitas,* symbolic brotherhood—another invariant and integral part of the Collective Body. But it is only on the surface the scene shows the harmony of brotherly love, creative work and national unity—exploding when the painful tooth of never-ending feudal envy and rivalry is touched. The craftsmen and stonemasons are going to leave upon completion of their work. Naively, they brag about rushing now to the city of Zvenigorod to decorate the palace of another prince, who promised to pay more and supply more beautiful and expensive materials.[22] "Another prince" happens to be the Grand Prince's and Big Brother's twin and old rival.

Blinding the craftsmen (artisans, masons in various works on Tarkovsky) is the act which can be discussed in terms of social control, political semantics and ritual symbolism. It is a most sophisticated torture—to suddenly hunt down and blind the whole artel of artisans, leaving them in the middle of the woods neither dead nor alive—in the hands of fate, to die or survive. However, as violent and ruthless as it is, this action is a demonstrative, representative action and is directed rather at their future patron, the rival prince, than the masons themselves. It is a slap in the brother's face, a message to him that as hard as he can try, he would never reach the supremacy of the Grand Prince, and the beauty of his palace can never be compared to that of his rival brother.

The episode can be explored as a highly controversial representation of the sacrificial ritual. The latter, for Turner, is the exchange of energies between this and other worlds; for Girard, it is a redirection of violence. Thus, according to Girard, the Grand Prince re-directed his violent energy from his usual object, the brother to his ritual substitutions, the subjects/footmen eager to serve the rival Prince of Zvenigorod. The Grand Prince 'created' a situation of ritual substitution, which ultimately saves more lives from the brother's devastating wars (something that *The Raid* episode will illustrate). From this viewpoint, there is a certain 'ritual economy' in sacrificing few people instead of many from the perspective of the ruler. Identifying the masons—the artists—with the protagonist Andrei Roublev, the divine talent, Tarkovsky comments on and argues with the 'political economy' of totalitarian regimes. According to Turner, the sacrificial ritual is intended to facilitate the flow of energy from the beyond and to bring magic powers into the hands of the initiating of a ritual action. In Prince's barbaric mind, warm human blood is meant to strengthen his power, elevating his status in the face of gods and people. However, in the structure of film-ritual, the spilled blood of the masons, which tore Andrei's heart apart and brought inexpressible anger into his soul, eventually strengthens the magic power not of the politician, but rather of the artist, protagonist, the compassionate *ritual observer*, a representative of the Collective Body.

In the context of political semantics, the mutilated faces of the artisans are a letter, with a coded message, to be received and understood by the political opponent. Ironically and tragically, the suffering and pain of the blinded masons are a semantic action, nothing but a 'message'—from one politician to another. But it is men's real blood which is the ink and their flesh which is the paper of this superior political communication. That their mutilation is not about them adds even more poignant quality to the sufferings of men. Precisely because the artisans are just the echo of others men's hate and are themselves innocent bystanders of the fight between the rich and powerful, the meaninglessness and irreversibility of their suffering is made even more astounding. The ruthless act of violence is about feudal rivalry and directed from one brother to another literally through the bodies of their subjects. The blinded faces of masons are the reflector, the distorted mirror of the rulers' communication and their 'brotherly hate'—the distortion and disintegration of the Collective Body.

The blinding of the men is shown in the most striking way from the viewpoint of horses. It is with them the viewers are made to identify in this episode by means of camera angle, composition and rhythm. They panic, neighing and rearing back, when their riders pull up the defenseless men up to the horses' torsos and suddenly blind them, spraying animals with the warm human blood. The scared animals fiercely try to run away as if they were the ones being tortured. The horses paradoxically identify themselves not with the bodies of men who ride them, but with the bodies of men who are blinded. The episode is shot in a dynamic metaphorical cross-identification. The human beings are transformed into sacrificial animals, while the horses rise in their empathy to the level of superior wisdom. The animals are more compassionate and 'human' that the humans themselves. The horses' fear and despair make this episode's intense emotions even more profound and astounding. The scene metaphorically equates the men and animals desperately running, trying to escape, fiercely protecting themselves in the wild bushes of the woods. The horse-like mythological creatures of magic and wisdom, nevertheless, cannot help themselves and are ruthlessly slaughtered. This pure cinematic, momentary 'transformation' of the medieval artists into the dying centaurs, Pegasus, in the metaphorical imagery of Tarkovsky, makes the episode naturalistically shocking and philosophical at the same time. It is not the only metaphorical supernatural imagery that subtly reveals itself through the film's heavy black-and-white naturalistic style: the flying man, the fawn-like buffoon, the witch of the forest and the mermaid of the river, the animal-like holy fool girl, the apparition of the old master Theophannes and finally Boriska, a fire-boy, devilish little creature, who brings from the underworld the magic music of the bell—all remain realistic, historic-like characters and yet mythological beings in the unique cinematic world created by Tarkovsky.

Although the blinding is one of the most unforgettable graphic and naturalistic episodes of violence in the films of Tarkovsky, this scene vividly manifests the underlying ritual symbolism. It is Andrei's piercing gaze, his Eye, which is a true protagonist of the film narrative. The eye as a symbol of vision and spirituality has ritual connotations in all world cultures.[23] What is taken from these wandering artists—again, wandering artists as the ritual figures—is vision and, consequently, their ability to create. In the film about Russia's genius, greatest icon painter, penetrated by the theme of vision from the beginning to the end—the action of blinding is especially horrifying as a possible fate for the hero and hence the world's loss of his great paining. Within the system of matrix identifications by Andrei with the (echo)protagonists of every embedded story—the narrative device of the entire film chosen and stressed by Tarkovsky—this is a violent blinding of Roublev himself and of the author—filmmaker, and other artists. And with all of them, of the ritual man, the initiating, the spectator in the darkness of the movie theatre. The woods here symbolize the Forest—the space of ritual death; the mutilation represents the ritual dismembering/disintegration and the loss of eyesight metaphorically points at the loss of a vision, thus, with the loss of hope for a sacred knowledge and rebirth. The most meaningful human organ—the instrument of the artist and the protagonist to see, absorb, meditate and transmit to us, the audience, their observations as witnesses of history—the art of icon painting and the art of filmmaking, as a present communication between the audience and the screen—all are physically endangered by the blinding the medieval masons in the middle of the Russian woods. This highly naturalistic, excruciatingly physical painful act appears to be deeply connected with the hero and the spectators on various symbolic levels. The blinding of the secondary figures, although interconnected with the protagonist on various levels (also artists, wanderers, poor and inferior servants of the powerful and rich, and simultaneously free and independent seekers of the beauty and meaning), becomes threatening as possible execution of the main hero. Striking as an event in its own tragic sense, it is also a signifier, a foreshadow of the possibility—all compassing violence—that the hero miraculously escaped and thus left for us, the progeny, his masterpieces. The fragility of human life and art is signified by the episode of the craftsmen's mutilation. The Eye, which is destroyed in this episode, has been always been a root metaphor in many world cultures symbolizing the spirit and the divine. Vision and creativity—two corner stones of the metamessage and transgenerational skills circulating within the Collective Body—are taken from the symbolic wandering artists of the film in the moral labyrinth of war. They will never be able to see or to create art and beauty. What almost happened to the free-spirited and fertile participants in the Celebration and what did happen to the Buffoon and masons—wandering artists of all kinds—may have easily happened to Andrei; death is running around loose in medieval Russia. Human life means nothing, and the ritual man on his spiritual quest may be an easy and defenseless victim for violence of any origin and reason.

***Theophannes the Greek.*** As "vision" plays a pivotal role for understanding the divine message, a revelation, both Andrei and Theophannes try to recreate in their artistic imagination the initial event of their faith. Their dream-visions—two different representations of Christ's crucifixion—are embedded in the script of the plot. Each of them ritually (re)creates the 'initial' mythological heroic event, representing its two versions—one traditional, distant, in the setting of the desert by the old man, and the other, Andrei's, the young artist's—in the clothing of serfs, in the white snowhills of medieval Russia. In both settings/interpretations, the symbolic significance of Christian myth for Russia is emphasized.[24] Identification with the tragic reality of crucifixion and understanding that the ritual crucifixion, in its widest sense, is still a predestination of the Russian people, followers of Christian faith, is demonstrated in the following episodes.

***The Raid*** (The Attack). Like a black cloud, tornado, a furious storm of nature, the Tartar raid is shown to be moving towards the sacred Russian town where Andrei works in the cathedral. The Tartars, a progeny of the Mongol hordes brought to the Russian borders by Chingiz-khan, have been believed to be the main evil of the Russian historical fate. Their invasion and three-century occupation of Rus' is traditionally considered in Russian historical science the main reason why a nation of once literate European people with high culture, architecture and art, was thrown back into 'barbarism' (a brutal savage Medieval social structure of an Asian type) which ultimately shaped the future of the Russian nation. Whether or not it is an accurate interpretation is a question for historians; most likely it is, but what is more important is that this interpretation and traditional emphasis on an external enemy is very convenient for all kinds of Russian nationalistic ideologies and apologists for Russia's special way (and thus, irresponsibility for its own historical flaws), including that of the Soviet era.

Tarkovsky, as early as the 1960s, dared to challenge this 'common notion' of history and change its ideological accents. He turned the vectors of interpretation of the Tartar occupation and its historical significance in the most polemical way. It was the younger brother, the *twin* (thus 'one of many' in the film's social semantics), the humiliated, insulted and angry Prince of Zvenigorod, who in *Andrei Roublev* organizes and leads the raid of Tartars on his brother's capital. Never mind that his own Russian people, inhabitants of Vladimir, will be killed, raped, tortured and robbed in this raid, as was always the case in Tartar invasions. Never mind that the sacred ancient Russian town will be destroyed—the pride of the young prince (certainly not the masons) would be revenged.

Mysterious devise by means of which Tarkovsky signified and emphasized the panic and sufferings in the ruined Vladimir and its dying inhabitants—men, women, children, cows, horses and geese—has been written on extensively. The geese, with their clumsy attempts to fly away, trying to escape the disaster, thrown by the director in the camera's close-up (unexpectedly even for the director of photography) against the background of fire, smoke, human corpses, burning cows and flying arrows, became a metaphorical high point in the episode's shock and horror. Nobody has been able to articulately explain the sudden impact and unconscious imaginary power of geese in the middle of human disaster, but critics agreed on the enigmatic effect of this intuitive artistic decision. What is subliminally incorporated into the polysemantic metaphorism of this episode is the underlying ritual symbolism of the geese associated with 'feeding/nurturing' and 'fate/future'.[25] Metaphorically stressing the flesh, vulnerability and peace, the image of geese indirectly refers to the semantic sphere of the Collective Body.

The cathedral is the heart of the city and of the religion—its pivotal point, a sacred ritual space, which supposedly can protect the people of faith. The people of Vladimir are shown gathered, frightened and praying on their knees inside the cathedral's giant walls. Instead, the *heart of the heart*—the main cathedral of the main sacred city—becomes the object of destruction, humiliation and sacrilege on the part of invaders. Thus the whole Collective Body is shown to be profaned, betrayed and 'crucified' in the episode of the raid. The Tartars pollute, rob and ruin the inner space of the cathedral, crushing gold from the walls and ceilings. They torture the peaceful simpleton, monk, cathedral keeper (Yuri Nikulin, future Grandfather and also a keeper of treasures /sacred values in *Scarecrow*) pouring boiling metal into his throat—before our very eyes. Despite the torture, he did not reveal the secret place where the sacred objects and treasures of the church were kept.

The theme of the destroyed and desecrated cathedral is an underlying flash forward, a well-known historical connotation with another invasion—that of the fascists. They ordered the people to gather in their village church and then burnt all of them inside and with their church building: this happened in many places in Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia (a theme represented in Elem Klimov's film *Go and See,* and many other World War II Soviet movies). Thus, a protecting space of faith—the ritual circle—becomes as vulnerable as the people and is crucified along with them.

Another historical flash forward was planned by Tarkovsky in his script as the scene of *hair sacrifice* by the Russian women as a redemption from the Tartars. The piles of hair was a conscious connotation with the theme of Holocaust; the episode was not shot, possibly, for reasons of censorship. The long hair of women has become one of the most important ongoing images in all films by Tarkovsky—especially signified and developed in *Mirror* (mother's hair). As many critics pointed out, Tarkovsky was enchanted by long hair and made it one of the metameanings in his metaphorical symbolism. Hair has always been an object of magic power and strong mystic connection with the beyond and the forces of nature.[26] Women in medieval Russia were not allowed to wear long loose hair, because it was believed, like in many other cultures, that long hair possesses magic powers. Wearing long hair down was associated with extreme and ritualistic situations: a disaster (trouble, death, funeral) or a form of social and religious dissidence (protest, 'witchcraft', pagan rituals), or mental illness. The women with loose long hair in the film are only the women celebrating the pagan fertility ritual and the wandering holy fool girl.

The Holy Fool is the most sacred figure in Russian cultural tradition. It may be said to be the apple of the eye in self-identification of the Russians: it was considered to be a symbolic child of the nation, an immune protégé of the whole Collective Body. It represents extreme weakness and strength simultaneously: the social vulnerability of the Russian simple man/woman and his/her spiritual connection to the beyond. The ritual fool does not have an understanding of the rules of his/her time—rather, s/he belongs to Great Time, and his/her 'foolishness' represents a gap between the Great and historical time, between commonsense and sacred wisdom. The holy fools (*yurodivye*) in Russian historical reality were often mentally ill, endowed with special magic powers by folk belief, and/or religious seekers/pilgrims, who took upon themselves the painful role of *yurodivy,* wanderer without possessions, unaware of commonsense and the rules of the social world. In both cases, folk tradition never questioned the rational/irrational reasons for becoming a *yurodivy* because in either case it was associated with the ritual tradition. A godly meaning and divine predestination was believed to be present in the fate of the holy fool. God was believed to be embodied and represented in as well as communicated through the holy fool with the people of Russia.[27] The metatextual significance of the holy fool figure as a carrier of the *divine vision* is found throughout the history of Russian culture, literature, cinema; it was re-signified by Dostoevsky in his *Idiot* as a cultural root-metaphor of the Russian man (woman) in the context of modern culture. *Idiot,* in fact, was Tarkovsky's most cherished and important project, one which he was never allowed to make. However, the metatextual meaning of the holy fool was reflected in his films, like for example, the character of Stalker (*Stalker*) and Dominico (*Nostalgia*).[28] In the films discussed in this dissertation, many contain the holy fool-type of figure: the Jewish father in *Commissar,* the heroine of *Repentance,* Lena in *Scarecrow,* Shostakovich in *The Viola Sonata.* It can also be related to Chaplin's tradition in the world cinema and to the paradigmatic protagonist "Shaman-Trickster-Fool" in the semiotic anthropology of culture.

Tarkovsky made his holy fool a young female (played by his wife Irma Raush), a homeless and mentally disabled little wanderer, thus reinforcing her vulnerability, femininity and connection of the *yurodivaia* to the Collective Body. Holy fools were believed to be protected by divine power. To offend a holy fool was considered one of the greatest possible sins in the Russian cultural tradition. The holy fool, as a ritual figure, was believed to have his/her own mission, obscure and incomprehensible to ordinary people, but associated with the revelation of the divine invisible truth—sacred wisdom.

It is the rape of the holy fool girl (the most sacred ritual figure), in the upper level of the Vladimir cathedral (the sacred center of the Universe, a symbolic heaven/beyond, according to the religious cosmology) by the offender—one of "ours"—a Russian soldier brought with the Tartars by the prince-traitor—that becomes the film's climax and its turning point. The rape pulled Andrei from his usual shell of observer—a role of 'all-understanding,' a non-judgmental silent witness. Fiery from killing and blood, the soldier grasps the girl and carries her upstairs, paying no attention at her wordless animal-like cries.[29] Not only does Andrei act impulsively at this moment, but he commits an act, that as a religious servant, a monk, an artist and simply a moral and spiritual individual, would be unthinkable. Protecting the holy fool from the rapist, he kills the man—the Russian soldier, the 'brother', who however, has violated all the sacred rules of nature and culture.

***The Silence*****.** Andrei could not have acted differently, and his action in defense of the deaf-mute girl, however controversial, was justified by the brutality of the raid and violation of the entire system of the sacred values of Russian culture. Yet his action still remained a murder. Andrei could not forgive himself for taking another man's life for whatever justifiable reasons. The hero's sin, which focuses in itself all the controversy of the national spiritual history, becomes a basis for his forthcoming ritual action—taking upon himself a vow of silence. The latter, equated to ritual death, implied not only refusal to communicate with people, but also to work, to paint, to create. It was not only Andrei's own unforgivable sin, but the accumulation of all the sins of others that he witnessed on his ritual journey. It was all the violence, betrayal and cruelty of his land, his people, his own Collective Body that determined Andrei's self-sacrificial action—his self-appointed symbolic death.

At the moment of the most painful despair and self-doubt in Andrei's life, the host of Theophannes comes to visits him. Andrei's deceased friend and spiritual advisor comes forward again, now in the image of guardian ancestor spirit to support, comfort and direct Andrei in the right direction. At this point of dramatic crisis, Theophannes speaks not from his experience as a human, but from a larger perspective—that of Great Time and the Collective Body. His outlook has drastically changed: the positions of Theophannes and Andrei have now switched. Now Andrei is in despair and has lost his belief in the human spirit, morality and goodness, while Theophannes pronounces words of faith and wisdom, making efforts to persuade Andrei of the moral heights of the human race.

Theophannes clearly plays a ritual role of the initiating, a magic helper to the initiated—Andrei, who is lost in the Forest of symbolic death, with his soul and identity disintegrated and symbolically dead. Andrei is shown going through his most difficult rite of passage, a mid-life crisis and a crisis of a thinker, believer and artist. It is to the host of Theophannes, his sacred instructor, that Andrei gives a vow of silence to redeem his sin, thus marking the beginning of his symbolic death, a liminal state of betwixt and between. Although the film audience was used to seeing Andrei silent, this silence has been determined by its narrative function and was profane, non-ritual, a modest position of monk, the outsider of human society. The new level of silence that Andrei enters is a now sacred ritual silence, which represents a symbolic death in the widest possible way and which is designed to process all the painful and controversial events absorbed by Andrei on his sacred journey.

It is essential to emphasize the difference between the interpretation of silence in the semiotic and in the semiotic-anthropological approach. The latter stresses silence as a ritual-symbolic code, rather than a symbolic communication. Silence is a form of secret social communication, but it should be referred to as an important structural moment in the ritual process of socio-cultural transformation. The pivotal point of ritual communication is the orientation in the semantic field with regard to sacred knowledge—a condition for human survival, which is not necessarily present in any symbolic communication. Silence may indicate the phase of the *dying from*—disintegration of the established and discredited sphere of profane knowledge—or the phase of the *dying to* (in Turner's terms)—a silent way of the understanding of/penetrating into/empathy with sacred knowledge, which is designated to form a new semiosphere. Sacred versus profane silence is an external immobile form of the highly intensive internal transformative process—a sacred journey, which takes place behind the visible disconnection from reality. Silence may represent a stage of collapse, dumbness or *prima materia, human plasm,* or a phase of accumulation of the new knowledge. Therefore, silence may express disorientation, or re-orientation, destruction of the whole semantic field, or its reintegration. In the semiotic anthropology, it is essential to differentiate between profane and sacred silence, that of the lost and that of the enlightened, the one to be initiated, or of the initiating, who has already gained a sacred message. Silence may express what Russian symbolism emphasized as '*durnaia beskonechnost'*.[30] The infinite absurdity, a complex chaos, it may catch all the meanings in the trap of nonsense, exposing the degradation of the obsolete semiosphere. But it may also carry out a new cosmology, which is not expressible yet in existing languages. Silence expresses the mysterious moment when the lowest point of ritual process transforms into its highest point. The whole cinematic world of *Andrei Roublev* may be interpreted as decoding the hero's ritual silence as a mythological riddle important for understanding transformative moments of culture. The cultural hero's silence was characteristically represented by Tarkovsky as the *dying to*, a movement toward sacred knowledge and a new cosmology, therefore a presence rather than an absence, creation rather than destruction, victory rather than defeat.

Thus, behind the protagonist's silence and 'narrative immobility'/passivity an inner action of the highest dramatic tension and significance is taking place. The birth of a new spirituality, a new philosophy, a new cosmology of the entire cultural universe ascended to a new level will be manifested in the film's finale in the revelation of Roublev's great art.

The theme of silence, previously discussed in the context of *The Viola Sonata,* was first introduced by Tarkovsky in *Andrei Roublev.* It has become a mytheme of Soviet art, determined, however, on the deepest cultural level by the semiosphere of ritual silence. Andrei Roublev was completed and prohibited simultaneously (1967) with Aranovich's *Gorky: The Last Years,* another film that developed the issue of social silence. It was later echoed in the ritual silence of Sokurov's hero in *The Lonely Voice of a Man.* These four films compose a certain inter- and metatextual 'architectonics of silence' within Soviet antitotalitarian film art, which are also resonate in the works of many other directors and writers.

***The Bell.*** As a form of trance, a metaphorical dream, the ritual silence is a symbolic death from which the initiand cannot awake without help from outside his system of meanings. A special magic helper or sacred communication with the forces beyond, a revelation, can give an initiand new wisdom, new power and make him a new cultural hero. The ring of a magic ritual bell becomes the moment of revelation in the film-ritual, in Andrei's sacred journey. Submerged together with the hero in the state of symbolic death, Russia, devastated by feudal wars, Tartar invasions, social suppression and famine, needs a catalyst, a trigger to start a healing, reviving process. The Grand Prince of Vladimir rebuilds the cathedral and seeks a bell-caster to create a giant bell—a new integrating ritual symbol. An ultimate instrument for collecting the body of nation, a bell is a ritual means to unite the country/people and to rise its/their exhausted spirit.

Alone in the empty village, a young frail and hungry teenager, observes how Grand Prince's men are searching the huts for a bell-maker. Everyone has died in the craftsmen's village, explains the boy to the Prince's men. The death of the craftsmen in the village devastated by the famine and destroyed by the feudals wars, echoes the death of the masons in *The Last Judgment.* The picture of devastation reveals that no craftsman has survived the wars and there is no one to cast a bell for the Grand Prince and a new Russia. Horrified by the perspective to be left alone to die, abandoned in the empty village, the boy comes forward. Boriska promises that he can make a bell, that his father, a bell-caster left him the secret before his death—a folklore-type mythological situation with the child who promises to save the kingdom. (The role of Boriska was written for a young talented Moscow poet, but eventually given to Nikolai Burliaev, the lead in *Ivan's Childhood,* Tarkovsky's first film).[31]

The boy lies: his father had not left him the secret, possibly thinking that Boriska is too young or unprepared for the initiation into the secret guild of bell-casters. Although Boriska realizes that he will be executed if fails, his choice is to die now or later—alone in the empty village or in Prince's palace after an attempt to built the most important bell for the entire country. As desperate and crazy as an abandoned and hungry orphan can be, Boriska, a survivor, is determined to try. In fact, although his father has never revealed the professional secret to his son, Boriska observed his father's work many times. And it is up to him now to put together bits and pieces of his observations—of sacred knowledge—to make the bell ring.

In most world cultures the sound of a bell "is a symbol of creative power. Since it is in a hanging position, it partakes of the mystic significance of all objects which are suspended between heaven and earth. It is related, by its shape, to the vault and, consequently, to the heavens."[32] A bell, as a ritual object, has a direct connection to the symbolism of ritual rebirth. The figure of bell-caster in the context of ritual semantics is a shamanistic one, connected even more than that of the blacksmith with the magic elementa of the underground/otherworld—the soil, metals and fire—the plasmatic substances—materials for the *dying to,* re-creating a new life.

Struggling with his own fears, confusion, lack of knowledge and experience, cruel to himself and others, *killing himself*—depriving himself of sleep and food, exhausted and dirty as a devil—Boriska miraculously creates a bell. He creates it literally out of the body of earth and fire. Rain and Mud—the natural elementa of the film's beginning echo in the final episode the symbolic images of Mud and Fire. A giant, house-size bell for the main national cathedral is built from the mysterious combination of elementa that Boriska intuitively unites, guided by memories and visions.

The moment the bell rings, thus meaning that the boy succeeded, Boriska falls unconscious, barely alive and alone, far from the celebrating crowd. Andrei, who was present all this time, witnessing this either real story or legend—Boriska's efforts to create a miracle—comforts and embraces the boy. His small fragile figure in a fetal position is a metaphorical symbol of a dead child's body in the arms of a father and, simultaneously, a body of a new-born coming into the world and embraced by his mother. This ambivalent image of the death-rebirth of Boriska symbolizes a magic ritual transformation: a survivor from the dying, a man from the body of child, a respected craftsman from a status of rightless serf, the initiating, master from the initiand, a cultural hero from an unknown orphan. Boriska, rather than Andrei, according to Tarkovsky, is the true hero of his film.

Together with Boriska's rebirth, Andrei is also reborn; his own trial, passage is also over. The first words Roublev pronounces after many years of silence are words of tenderness and appreciation to the unconscious boy: "We will go together—you will cast bells, I will paint icons"—thus the ritual process continues. Boriska's story is a trigger, a catalyst of Andrei's own rite of passage and a parable, a sacred message of the film itself. His efforts brought survival and new life not only to himself, not only to Roublev, but to the nation, to the Collective Body.

However, the question remains unanswered—how did he do it? Tarkovsky shows that it was Boriska's heroic deed that reversed the course of events in the life of Roublev; as a model cultural hero, he elevated Andrei to a new spiritual level. But the director does not explain the inner logic of Boriska's own ritual death-rebirth. Where and how did the autocatalytic process within this rite of passage reverse the impossible into the miracle? Tarkovsky, whose film is a mystery in many ways (including the re-creation of a medieval genre of mystery and of its prototype—the ritual structure), leaves it as a puzzle. The enigma of Boriska's miraculous success, a teenager's impossible creation of a giant ritual object—the magic Bell designated to reunite the Collective Body—is left unexplained within the film narrative, but can be investigated by applying the logic of ritual semantics.

How could a young teenager have created a giant bell (a reference to the Czar-Bell of the Moscow Kremlin), a national symbol, a new sacred object for the rebuilding the state, reuniting the nation? This is a mystery which Tarkovsky does not intend to reveal. This episode, as any other in *Andrei Roublev,* is shot in a realistic manner, but is also a mystery, a ritual riddle, symbolic parable, a new inspiring myth about the cultural hero. As the bell-makers of ancient ritual times were directly connected to magic channels, the bell-caster is a 'shaman' of the new religious culture which sacralizes the church and the bell, as the earthly centers/object-channels for sacred communication with the beyond. Bell-casting has always been associated with the secrecy, characteristic for transmitting the *sacra,* according to Turner. The fact that the dying father had a secret, but did not give it to Boriska, points to the importance of the special sacred procedure of initiation—ritual process—that had to be performed but was not, for the reasons films does not explain (war? hunger? or other interruptions of the tradition and its continuous ritual procedures?).

The film shows how Boriska was searching for the right rare kind of clay for the bell—a special soil, a 'magic substance'. But a boy could not have possibly guessed the secret combination of elementa and the details of the magic process of bell's creation out of fire and earth. Symbolically, it was the voice of his father who was talking inside Boriska's head guiding and inspiring the boy, who took upon himself not only an adult's task, but that of the shaman, initiating and cultural hero. Without the voice of the father(s), the guardian spirit(s), and the whole ancestry of bell-casters, the boy, uninitiated, could have never been able to cast the Bell. What is missing on the narrative surface, and what is mysteriously present in the magic culmination of this episode, points at the Collective Body—the sacred connection, which Boriska may not even have realized, but which communicated through him and was responsible for his success and creation. The voice of the Collective Body, the guiding sacred instruction, which governed Boriska's hand, is enigmatically and symbolically present, as a collective protagonist, in the concluding episode of the film. Certainly, the heroic selfless and desperate action of an individual, his spiritual power and creative inspiration is praised in the story of the Bell. But it is a sacred knowledge of the Great Time and the Collective Body, which was given to Boriska by mysterious forces which cast the Bell. To ring, to call, to unite lost disintegrated segments of the people, to inspire them for the future are the ultimate ritual goals of the Collective Body fulfilled by Boriska's ritual action. Therefore, the agenda and mysteriousness of this story-parable directs us to the metatextual presence of the Collective Body in the film's concluding part and the film as a whole.

There is no surprise that the Bell awakens Andrei, frees him from the trance of symbolic death and endows him with new magic powers. The icons he creates at this new stage of his life represent supreme treasures of world culture. On the celebration of the new Bell all the people gather, thus the ultimate ritual function of the bell—to *collect* the disintegrated Collective Body—is fulfilled. Even those who perished—the executed buffoon and the holy fool girl kidnapped by Tartars appear. The two sacred cultural figures—the soul of art and the soul of the people return—as if revived from the dead. There was a passionate discussion among Soviet critics about one of the many intriguing moments of *Andrei Roublev*—how to understand the return of the buffoon at the end of the film? He appears on the celebration of the new Bell alive, but now 'silenced,' voiceless—his tongue had been cut out. Had the witty buffoon been imprisoned for twenty years and tortured, or he was killed and revived from the dead? I believe that Tarkovsky did not intend to clarify this issue, but on the contrary intentionally left it ambivalent as a part of his ritual mystery, which gives space for both interpretations (realistic or mythological), like many other enigmatic moments in *Andrei Roublev*.

The return of the perished at the people's celebration of national unity may also manifest the presence of the beloved dead—an invisible but crucial part of the Collective Body which also contributed to the great event. The 'dead spirits' subtly influenced the characters helping them from within the Great Time throughout the entire narrative—such as Theophannes the host, the buffoon (dead or alive, or half-dead), the keeper of 'sacred values'—the cathedral and its treasures, who was tortured to death and the father bell-caster, as well as the generations of masters, who 'invisibly' donated their sacred knowledge to the boy.

Boriska could have won (solved the riddle, fulfilled the magic assignment) precisely because the entire Collective Body was behind him. The boy becomes the hero of the story as he is the manifestation of the continuity and immortality of the Collective Body and its sacred tradition. The function of Andrei, as a protagonist representing a narrative focus, is also deeply associated with the ritual agenda of the Collective Body. What Andrei 'is doing' throughout the entire film, crossing the borders of narrative segments and witnessing unbrigeable gaps within the society, experiencing horror and compassion, is *collecting the pieces*. Rublev is walking around not only the land, but also the Collective Body, awakening and regenerating the body of the Russian nation and its spirit. The dramatic, narrative and ritual function of the protagonist in *Andrei Roublev* is in his re-collecting together, like the pieces of the divine puzzle, the disintegrated segments of the Collective Body. The film's fragmentary composition and the hero's independent route across the narrative boundaries emphasize and transmit this very message on the semantic level of film structure. Similar to the magic function of the alive and dead water in Russian folklore (composing /reviving), the wandering artist on his ritual journey compiles the broken parts of the Collective Body and the ring of the magic bell brings life back into it.

The film begins in the 'heavens' (flight) and ends 'in the heavens' (with the heavenly host of Roublev's painting).[33] This symbolic composition of the two embracing high points can be referred to as a path from spiritual birth to spiritual rebirth. Its lowest points—the descent, the symbolic death—are in the episodes *The Last Judgment* and *The Raid*. They represent the idea of apocalyptic fear and torture of hell, the blinding of masons, the destruction of Vladimir, the rape of the holy fool and Andrei's killing a man, which altogether results in the artist's vow of silence.

The artist as the ritual man is represented by Andrei and echoed in the matrix identity of the icon-painter, the buffoon, blinded craftsmen and the bell-caster. It is also re-presented in the initial identification of the authors-filmmakers—Andrei Tarkovsky and Andrei Konchalovsky (co-author of the script) with their ritual hero. Thus, the name becomes the initial point of the film as a ritual process. The *ritual name* focuses on itself the ritual action with the symbolic row of the artists /creators, uniting also in the matrix-identity all the echo-protagonists of the film's multiple narrative.

The colorful icons—the first and meaningful manifestation of color in the black and white film—comes as an awakening, a rebirth, a powerful creative energy transmitted through Andrei to the people by the Collective Body. It is the revelation of the Trinity, in both artistic and religious sense—the divine manifestation, called for by the ritual effort—the powerful voice of the artist and the ring of the magic bell. God or the soul of the Collective Body (within the religious or ritual interpretation) returns to the people of Russia in the sacred image of Trinity designed by Roublev. The message Roublev sends to the people with his painting is inseparable from a sacred instruction he was inspired by—the wisdom and power of the Collective Body. Even more precisely, these particular new creations of Andrei, especially his *Trinity* express the Collective Body's image in the most vivid and ritual way. Trinity, the most popular, cherished and sacralized symbolic image of God in Russian religious tradition, points at the unexhausted polytheism and a need to perceive God as a unity. Trinity may be considered a sacralization of the Collective Body, and its manifestation within the medieval image of a Christian god.[34] Roublev has been known as the most vivid ritual instructor, an artist who manifested and established the idea of divinity in its motherly, caring, all-understanding and collective imagery.

Roublev's *Trinity* is known as a unique representation of the reverse vista—multiple point-of-view—as if the Holy Trinity looks at the observer simultaneously from various perspectives. The polyphonic vision, which Bakhtin emphasized in his writings as a cultural agenda, is represented in Roublev's *Trinity* as a divinity of motherly embrace, Great Time and overcoming (a flight over) a monodimensional space. This is the message which is communicated by the entire structure of Tarkovsky's film and its highest cathartic moment of revelation. The figure of the film protagonist is deeply meaningful in the context of quantum semiotics and the issue of the Collective Body. The artistry of Roublev is unique in its combination of extremely sophisticated multiple perspective—God's vision directed at you and presented as a *process* in spite of the fixed time of the picture (something that will be later developed by such artists as Picasso only in the twentieth century) and the humanistic, tender, love-radiating emotional tonality of the divine image (something that modern culture has completely lost). The divinity that is embracing, supporting and all-understanding, rather than punishing, is exactly like the *Rodovoe Telo*—the Collective, Birth-Giving Body of Genus.

Although Tarkovsky has never used the concept of ritual (something not habitual in the Soviet system of meanings), the director's understanding of cinema and its role in culture is deeply associated with the key issues of the anthropology of cinema. However, he stressed that "religion and art are two sides of a coin"[35] No other post-war Russian filmmaker presented such a rich variety of ritual motifs, which played key roles in the narrative structure of his films: *Ivan's Childhood* (1962), *Andrei Roublev* (1966), *Solaris* (1972), *Mirror* (1974), *Stalker* (1979), *Nostalgia* (1983), and *Sacrifice* (1986). All of Tarkovsky's films can be explored in the context of anthropology and ritual semantics, but among his filmtexts *Andrei Roublev* is the most rich in ritual connotations. The masterpiece on the ritual journey of the great Russian artist has also the most direct and multileveled references to the problematics of the Collective Body. As Tarkovsky explained the idea and plot of *Andrei Roublev,* the film was made to show how the people's yearning for brotherhood [*vsenarodnaia toska po bratstvu*]... originated The (holy) Trinity" in Russian culture.[36] Thus, it was a ritual need that generated the image of Trinity in medieval culture—the intermediate symbol between a monotheistic god and the divinity of the Collective Body in ritual consciousness. Both the medieval history and the totalitarian time were united by the wars between brothers and unbridgeable gaps in society. It was the ritual need of the post-Stalinist era that generated *Andrei Roublev* as a film-ritual designated to bridge the gaps within and facilitate the healing of the Collective Body. [37]

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For the historic and political context of the film's prohibition and release, see any of the monographs on Tarkovsky, for example, Mark Le Fanu, *The Cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky* (London, 1987), Peter Green, *Andrei Tarkovsky: The Winding Quest* (London, 1993), or Vida Johnson and Graham Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1994).

[1] As Johnson and Petrie point out, for two years Tarkovsky and Konchalovsky "were steeping themselves in Medieval Russian texts and reading chronicles and saints' lives, as well as history and art books." Johnson and Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky,* 79. Andrei Konchalovsky is currently an American filmmaker; he has recently received an award for his television production of Homer's *Odyssey* (1997).

[2] Russia's space and the need for its overcoming have determined a special significance of the genre for literature and culture. Travelling is one of the most archetypal ritual-narrative actions in Russian classical literature. See, for example, the woks of Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Lev Tolstoy and Alexei Tolstoi—his three-volume novel *The Road to Calvary.*

[3] I refer here to the most thorough monograph on Tarkovsky—a book with many insightful ideas by Johnson and Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky:* A *Visual Fugue.*

[4] Translation of the episodes is quoted according to Johnson and Petrie; other translations are presented in parenthesis. Besides the episodes officially introduced by Tarkovsky, I also emphasize certain segments with their own distinct theme, important for understanding the composition as a whole.

[5] The definition of Tarkovsky's style as a "visual fugue," which I find very precise, belongs to Johnson and Petrie. For synopsis of *Andrei Roublev,* see also their book, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky,* 265-72. Each

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episode of *Andrei Roublev* has exact historical setting. The film consists of the following eight episodes: Prologue, "The Buffoon," set in 1400, "Theophannes the Greek" dated 1405, "The Passion According to Andrei," set in 1406, "The Celebration," dated 1408, "The Last Judgment," 1408, "The Raid," dated 1408, "The Silence," dated 1412, "The Bell," set in 1423. However, I do not include historical references into my analysis for two reasons: a) they do not reflect authentic historical data, while representing the film authors' historical hypothesis: almost no data exist on the life of Andrei Roublev; b) the goal of my study is to emphasize the anthropological and symbolic aspects of the filmtext rather than the historical.

[6] Interestingly, this epigraph corresponds with the most generalized meaning of flight in world culture: "Flight has always represented freedom from physical restrictions of earth-bound life, and the ascent of the soul to the gods, either through mystical experience or through death." David Fontana, *The Secret Language of Symbol: A Visual Key to Symbols and Their Meanings* (San Francisco, 1993), 86.

[7] The symbolic idea of flight in Russian culture was associated with the meanings of freedom and escape. A representative example is the monologue "Why people don't fly?" in N. Ostrovsky's nineteenth-century classical drama *Storm*. In Soviet culture, after the motif of flight was reintroduced by Tarkovsky in the semiosphere of cinema and culture, it was used in the films by Larisa Shepit'ko (*Wings*), Sergei Ovcharov (*Neskladukha* and *Nebuval'schchina—Nonsense* and *Fiction*), Roman Balaian (*The Flights in the Dreams and Reality*) Yuri Mamin (*Fountain*), Iraklii Kvirikadze (*Swimmer*) and many others.

[8] In Green's words: "The camera follows the ascent of the balloon from above the roof of the cathedral, adopting a God-like vantage point... Tarkovsky enables the viewer to share the sensual experience of flying by means of a subjective camera flight," Green, *Andrei Tarkovsky*, 46.

[9] A striking and hilarious appearance of the Buffoon's behind *as a face* in the beginning of the episode, was cut later by the censorship, thus destroying important carnival imagery, according to the memoirs of Yuri Nazarov. "What is the most disappointing for me is that the scene with the wandering minstrel, where Rolan Bykov appears with his behind painted, was cut." See Yuri Nazarov, "I Cherish Tarkovsky the Realist" in *About Tarkovsky*, ed. Marina Tarkovskaya (Moscow, 1990), 112.

[10] Exactly, according to Bakhtin, although the filmmaker and actors most probably have not yet read *Rabelais*, as it was first published at the time of the film's shooting.

[11] The ritual meaning of Russian 'mat'—a popular obscene language closely interlaced with the meanings of fertility, has been investigated by many researchers; its connection to ancient rituals was touched upon in the works by Bakhtin.

[12] Bykov recalls his work on the dancing and text of the buffoon: "No choreographer can know how the buffoon dances... I have seen five or four drawings of a buffoon with a tambourine, a goat and a bear." When Bykov found original verses by a Russian buffoon in the Lenin library, he discovered that the performance was full of obscenities, "swear words pure and simple." Rolan Bykov, "A Cinematography Philosopher" in About Tarkovsky, 150-51.

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[13] Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, 110-111. Here and further I extensively use the work of Cirlot. Although his study of symbols does not represent traditional methods of semiotics or semiotic anthropology, his work is useful as it presents the most common interpretations of given symbols in world culture—important for understanding non-verbal functioning/perception of symbolism in film art.

[14] On the paradigmatic meaning of jealousy and envy in Russian culture in the works of Saltykov-Schedrin and in Soviet cinema, see my "Find the Magic Word."

[15] According to Afanasiev, after conversion of the Slavic people into Christianity, the new Orthodox church has adopted a Byzantine calendar. Thus, the traditional calendar of Ancient Slavs, as well as Slavic calendar rituals inseparable from pre-Christian conception of time, annual cycles and people's connection to them, became an object of prohibition and persecution. However, as Afanasiev stresses, the majority of population and also many princes still continued using Slavic names of the months until the end of the fifteenth century, while celebrations of traditional calendar rituals continued even longer. See, Afanasiev, *Tree of Life*, 425, and for more on the ritual of Ivana Kupala, 439-40. Tarkovsky exaggerated eroticism of this festival with regards to its actual forms in fifteenth century, referring to the ritual forms of Ancient Slavs rather than the time of Andrei Roublev. These ancient forms of Ivan Kupala celebration undauntedly were originally connected to fertility rituals and the solar calendar cycle—in particular, the midsummer. In more contemporary forms (dancing, fire works, gathering herbs, bathing/swimming, etc.) Ivan Kupala has been popular as late as the beginning of twentieth century in Russia and Ukraine.

[16] According to ancient Slavic mythology, the rivers are former people; their streams are the blood of the killed cultural heros which transformed into the clouds. Sometimes, the deity of the river was associated with Perun, the main god of the rainstorm (the 'Jupiter or Zeus of Slavic myths). Slavic mythology refers to the rivers as to the living creatures, capable of understanding, having their own feelings and communicating with people through speech. Afanasiev, *Tree of Life*, 204-05. For more on ancient Slavic mythology of the water and the river, see the chapter "Water," 186-214. It is interesting to present the opinion of Donatas Banionis, a famous Soviet actor and the lead in *Solaris*, on the episode of *Celebration*. He wrote in his memoirs: I personally regarded *Andrei Roublev* "with its pagans and their celebrations, this daydream taking you somewhere that cannot be expressed in words, as an unsurpassed work of art." Donatas Banionis, "Contact with the Unknown" in *About Tarkovsky*, 116.

[17] Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, 274.

[18] Green stresses that "the fact that the Grand Prince and his younger brother are played by the same actor might be seen as an early example of Tarkovsky's fondness of merging identities," 60. Merging and re-emerging identities, found in almost all films by Tarkovsky represent a complex system of signifiers which can be un-coded within the symbolism of the Collective Body.

[19] It is interesting to present Yuri Nazarov's perspective on the film: "Tarkovsky showed us that it is impossible for a nation to live without some higher spiritual aspirations, for without them the nation

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becomes nothing more than a herd. Roublev, the monk and icon painter believed in people, sympathized with them, and hoped art would awaken in them good, and a belief in their own potential... And in the midst of violence, darkness and filth, bright and shining artists like Roublev are born... Tarkovsky's films are, to the utmost degree, highly spiritual." Yuri Nazarov, "I Cherish Tarkovsky the Realist" in *About Tarkovsky*, 107-08.

[20] The critics (for example, Turovskaya) interpreted this cinematic device in the tradition of social critique as a visual representation of a Russian metaphor 'all on/with one face"—meaning that politicians were all alike in their morality and social actions. See her *7 1/2 or the Films of Andrei Tarkovsky* (Moscow, 1991). This reading is legitimate, however, it does not contradict the symbolism of the Collective Body, deeply rooted in the device of one actor playing the two opponents in *Andrei Roublev*, also reminiscent of a connotation of *The Shadow*—the man and his shade (in Jungian and in Shwartsian sense). In respect to his parts in *Andrei Rublev*, Nazarov recalls Tarkovsky's plan to emphasize the enemy brothers' love for each other (scenes were not shot because of budget cuts), manifesting what is called here the motif of the Collective Body. After he had led the Tatars' bloody attack on Vladimir, his brother's town, betraying his people, the prince is dying alone on the road, with the spear between his shoulder blades. "How would I have loved my brother if there hadn't been this war for power," says the dying man. At that very moment, his brother, the Grand Duke, riding his horse far from this place, suddenly stops. He says "My heart is trying to tell me something bad. One of my close relatives died..." One body divided/separated by the ruthless war for power, still feels for another part of the Collective Body as its own. See Yuri Nazarov, "I Cherish Tarkovsky the Realist," in *About Tarkovsky*, 112.

[21] A city north of Moscow known for its beautiful medieval cathedrals and a possible setting of the events in *Scarecrow*.

[22] The poetic, symbolic and ritual names of the old Russian cities—domains of the prince-brothers usually escapes attention of a foreign audience. The young prince rules Zvenigorod—"the Town of Ringing" or "The Ringing Town"; the ritual meaning of the ringing sound, of the bell will be further unfolded in the film's plot as its main theme. The elder brother rules Vladimir, which means the "Ruler of the World." The towns are signified in their ancient ritual names as sacred places, which, nevertheless, are exploited by the rival brothers as the setting for a bloody national war.

[23] With respect to the symbolism of the eye, Cirlot stresses the saying of Plotinus that the eye would not be able to see the sun if, in a manner, it were not itself a sun. "Given that the sun is the source of light and that light is symbolic of the intelligence and of the spirit, then the process of seeing represents a spiritual act and symbolizes understanding." Cirlot also points at the symbolic meanings of the 'divine eye,' a 'pupil of one's eye, and Jungian interpretation of the eye as the maternal bosom, and the pupil as its 'child'—what directs us again to the Collective Body, as polysemantic system of dynamic signifiers, wherein the image of eye plays a significant role." See, Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, 99-100.

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[24] The juxtaposition of the artists' visions in the script was not realized in the film; only Andrei's vision remained, while Theophannes' vision was among the scenes which were cut.

[25] "Like the duck, gander or swan, the goose is a beneficent animal associated with the Great Mother and with the 'descent into hell'. It is often found in folk tales (Mother Goose, Grimm's tales, etc.). It is likened with destiny as is proven by the 'goose game', a profane offshoot of the symbol space-time, representing the dangers and fortunes of existence, prior to the return to the maternal bosom." Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols,* 120. On the shooting of geese in *The Raid,* see the memoirs of Vadim Yusov, the director of photography in *About Tarkovsky,* 76.

[26] According to Cirlot, in the majority of world cultures, hair represent energy and fertility. In Hindu symbolism, for example, hairs, like the threads of a fabric, symbolize the 'lines of force' of the universe. Hair also corresponds with the primitive forces of nature. Beautiful hair signifies spiritual development. In general, Cirlot concludes, hair may be said to symbolize the concept of spiritualized energy. The loss of hair brought about by the forces outside man's control (like in the Tatar invasion in the script of *Andrei Roublev*) signifies willing sacrifice. Following other researchers of symbolism, Cirlot emphasizes the close connection of the symbols of hair with "the principles of procreation and multiplication of life," which defines hair as one of the most important dynamic signifiers within the semiosphere of the Collective Body. See, Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols,* 135. For more on hair in psychoanalysis and anthropology, see for example respectively, Charles Berg, *The Unconscious Significance of Hair* (London, 1951), Edmund Leach "Magical Hair" *Man,* LXXXVIII (1958), 147-164, Mary Douglas *Natural Symbols* (New York, 1970) and C.R. Hallpike "Social Hair" in *Reader in Comparative Religion.* In his introduction to Hallpike's article, Lessa emphasizes the general understanding that long hair is associated with being outside of society. Hallpike stresses the use of hair in ritual and magic and the key idea in world culture that hair has a close association with the soul. He also points at that long hair or hairiness is associated with the supernatural or half-human beings, such as fairies, dwarfs, water and wood spirits, devils and mermaids. See, Hallpike, "Social Hair," 101, 104. The latter are vividly represented on the metaphorical level of many images of Tarkovsky's long-haired heroines, such as Mother (*Mirror*), Khari (*Solaris*), 'Witch' and 'Mermaid' in the "celebration" and the holy fool girl (*Andrei Roublev*).

[27] For more on the Russian holy fool as a ritual figure in Russian culture and bibliography on the subject, see my "Towards the Anthropology of *Yurodivost.*"

[28] The name of Tarkovsky's film *Stalker* bears a mistake in translation from English that should be explained. The protagonist is not a stalker in the usual sense of modern English. He is a seeker, a searcher, in the most positive sense of these words. The film should be called 'Seeker', and its title has nothing to do with the meaning of stalker in American cinematic tradition. The confusion was generated by the SF writers, whose popular novel was used by Tarkovsky as the basis for the movie script. The brothers Strugatsky gave their character—a positive hero of their dystopia *Picnic on the Roadside*—a mysterious,

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'cool' Western-like sounding name. The character, in fact, is not a villain but rather a strange, weird searcher of the magic and sacred knowledge, falling into the steps of Dostoevsky's *Idiot.* His mission in Tarkovsky's film is to discover a zone of ritual magic and to bring people what they wish. In this sense he is a ritual man, the initiating, and the magic helper, in terms of ritual semantics.

[29] This moment—the climax of *Andrei Roublev*—is a striking contrast to the above-mentioned American film *Gummo,* in which a brother has a business selling his mentally disabled sister for sex.

[30] An expression in Russian that means a "stupid and dangerous infinity", "black whole" of meaning.

[31] For more on the controversy of the casting for this role, see Turovskaya, *7 1/2.*

[32] Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols,* 24.

[33] This observation belongs to Peter Green, *Andrei Tarkovsky: The Winding Quest,* 44.

[34] Fedorov's deliberations on Trinity are especially interesting in the context of *Andrei Roublev* and the Collective Body: "According to Trinity, the true unity is the closest connection of individuals, which manifests the element that we call morality... this unity is based on a psychological power of soul mating and mutual understanding... where the [sacred] knowledge belongs to everyone, as vzaimoznanie [mutual sacred knowledge of each other and the community] is the basis for such a society." Speculating on the future of Russia in the context of his ritual philosophy, Fedorov further writes (and his words now contain a bitter ironic meaning given our knowledge of twentieth-century history): "Russia wants (or does it?) to be what the West has rejected, abandoned... the uniting according to the image of Trinity (i.e. for the sake of revelation of the kinship of/among all humankind); in this it [Russia] cannot be merely a party, it should avoid wars and direct all its activity at preventing the reasons for any hostility, and most certainly, within itself." Fedorov, *Sochineniia,* 42-43. Fedorov also discusses Trinity as a given to us "projective principle" (a *model of/for,* in Geertz's terms)—"the immanent power of deep affection without an external constraint and violence." Ibid., 35.

[35] Tarkovsky, *Time Within Time,* 212

[36] Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time,* 34.

[37] For more on Tarkovsky's work on *Andrei Roublev,* see his *Sculpting in Time* and *Time Within Time.*

# Conclusions

**Aspects of Film-Ritual Research.** This study was not intended to present a detailed and complete picture of Soviet cinema in the 1960-90s. A selected number of films was chosen to explore the relationship between ritual and cinema in Soviet culture, in typological rather than chronological order. Each of the films was selected as an illustration and investigation of certain aspects of ritual semantics in cinema; the choice of films as conceptual models was determined by their ability to facilitate discussion on theoretical issues. The thesis is focused on aspects of narrativity as a key mode of realizing ritual symbolism in cinema. Studies of film-ritual may have emphasis on other possible dimensions of analysis, not covered in this thesis.[1] For example:

Social aspect: reconsideration of social roles in society with respect to the semantics of the ritual roles: "who is the sacred instructor? whose version of the sacred knowledge is donated? and what is the initiating being initiated for?"

Ideological/political aspect of film-as-ritual: reinterpretation of ritual symbolism by various ideological groups within a given society; the use of ritual content for the ends of political propaganda.

Axiological aspect: (re)interpretation and (re)establishment of sacred values.

Semantic aspect: (re)orientation of the whole semantic field towards ritual meanings and new sacred knowledge. The semantic transformation of the whole semiosphere, rather than of a single initiand (with his community).

Aesthetic aspect: aesthetic devices associated with the ritual semantics—narrative/drama paradigms. Ritual symbolism employs and stimulates the usage of archetypes, symbolic forms, metaphors, paradoxes, defamiliarization, meditation, catharsis in the structure of film, as well as the creative aspects of the imagery form: rhythm, music, sound, movement, silence, color, etc.

Cinematic aspect: stimulation and development of pure cinematic devices determined by the ritual paradigm and facilitated by the specific technology of cinema (both on the levels of directing/editing, computer animation, etc.) including virtual reality models, rhythms, montage, time/space conceptualization, sound-visual counterpoint, perspective, movement and dynamics.

The power of cinematic language in the films of many directors to a great extent was stimulated and determined by ritual need—ritual had to be let out, expressed and organized /structured in cinematic form. The necessity to grasp and express the inexpressible—the substance of ritual—determined the development of the variety of cinematic codes, forms and devices. Thus, intrinsic ritual symbolism has been a powerful stimulus for the development of cinema, in terms of film language, structure and content. Ritual has affected the experimental filmmaking of such great directors, as Eisenstein, Dovzhenko, Vertov, Paradjanov, Tarkovsky, Abuladze in the USSR, Bunuel, Fellini, Antonioni, Pasolini, Bertolucci, Bergman, Wajda, Kislewski in Europe, Kurasawa in Japan, Chaplin, Griffith, Hitchcock in the United States.

**Individual versus Masses.** The signification of the individual versus the collective has always been the main *rational* concern of Western (film)culture and theoretical strategy of Soviet antitotalitarian critique.[2] However, it has never been revealed how much the (film)culture, especially Soviet cinema between Stalinism and *perestroika*, has been preoccupied with the unavoidable problematic of the Collective Body, constantly referring to it on the deepest levels of film art. Although I used to be one of those ex-Soviet critics who propagated the individual as an opposition to the collectivity (creative, imaginative and free versus fruitless, trivial and enslaved), my personal sacred journey, in particular, the academic one into the domain of anthropology brought me to reconsider the basic cultural process of Soviet film art. There was indeed a fight over the individual versus collective concern in the ideological sphere, characteristic for the conscious level of antitotalitarian culture. But there also was a deeper process—the transfiguration of ritual symbolism, particularly, of the Collective Body's model, within the "collective unconscious" of film culture. And even the very process of individuation—the signification of the individual and one's personal journey toward his/her sacred self and the right place in the world—appears to be inseparable from the ritual process and the agenda of the Collective Body.

**Dimensions of Ritual.** Ritual symbolism, as was shown in the thesis, is manifest in cinema on various syntagmatic levels, such as title, theme, story line, protagonist, place or object involved in the narrative process, as was shown in the dissertation. Even more importantly, responding to the ritual need of the society, film tends to represent on the deeper level a paradigmatic structure of ritual—its embedded transformative mechanism. It was emphasized in the dissertation as ritual death-rebirth, which is designed to facilitate spectators' spiritual development. In Soviet cinema ritual symbolism is expressed in the following dimensions:

a) **ritual paradigm**—general metastructure of ritual process and ritual performance characteristic of all cultures (manifested, for example, in *Scarecrow, Solaris,* and played upon in *Die-Freeze-Revive!*).

b) **ritual tradition**—specific cultural symbolism that has been formed during the history of a given culture (predominantly Russian in the dissertation, however, aspects of other ritual traditions related to Soviet experience such as Ukrainian, Jewish, Georgian are touched upon in the discussion of certain movie). Ritual tradition was reflected in *Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors, Andrei Roublev, Repentance,* and other films by Abuladze: *Prayer* and *Wishing Tree.*

c) **ritual context**—a sphere of meanings and actions associated with the survival and development of the Collective Body—the vital community, humankind (for example, *Commissar, Repentance*).

d) **ritual ideology**—expropriation and exploitation of ritual symbolism—deliberate use of ritual ideas and devices for political ends by Soviet official ideology; as well as the semantic counter-strategies on the part of antitotalitarian culture—re-signification of ritual symbolism indoctrinated with Soviet ideas, and transformation of it into a powerful weapon against the official ideology (*It, Andrei Roublev, Festival of Neptune, Repentance*).

e) **ritual innovation**—creation via film culture of new ritual forms; rediscovery and re-establishment of the old forms, capable of carrying out the ritual functions, in particular—effective spiritual transformation of the spectator, as a community member (can be acknowledged in *It, Andrei Roublev, Nostalgia, Festival of Neptune, Die-Freeze-Revive! Repentance*).

**Ritual Code and Ritual Context.** The variety of other films may illustrate this classification. However, the two dimensions dominate in the cinema, *ritual code* and *ritual context*. They embrace, regulate and facilitate the processes of unification, condensation and polarization of ritual symbols in culture.

"I am against enclosure in the text," said Bakhtin, anticipating postmodern semiotic strategies against a "textual closure."[3] The investigation of ritual motifs and a spacious ritual-mythological context (the way of the New Critics and Frye) can be an effective possible way to overcome the limits of film as a text and to overcome its frames in order to constructing a film as a cultural text. The two 'superparadigms' that determine a ritual code in culture, particularly in the cinema, are associated with two fundamental models: the initial time (the dichotomy of sacred primeval times of creation and the empirical time) and the death-rebirth of a cultural hero. "A code is deliberately established, destroyed context," said Bakhtin.[4] But paradoxically, it is not the case with ritual code in the context of contemporary culture. Ritual code, derived from ritual tradition and reactualized in the deep structure of modern cultural forms, not only represents an open context, but also functions as an "opening" context. It stimulates and facilitates the revelation of the other codes, their deepest meanings, interaction and polyphonic communication.

**Ritual and Culture.** Ritual critique in literary studies has had its high and low points in the history of literary theory. Recent criticism of its methods, as well as of Frye's mythopoetics was based on the proposition that the acknowledgment of ritual motifs and structures on every level of culture destroys the notion of culture as such, replacing it by the notion of ritual.[5] This type of criticism manifests an important distinction between the definition of culture in literary studies and anthropology: "literature as culture versus ritual as religion" in the former, and "ritual as a part of culture" in the latter. The ritual found as a determining driving force of the cultural process does not deny or replace culture; rather ritual brings new dimensions to the understanding of its underlying mechanisms. While ritual has been something alien, or external to culture in mainstream literary studies, anthropology has always referred to ritual as an inseparable part of the cultural process. The goal of the present thesis was to analyze ritual as an integral part of culture (including film culture), and to integrate ritual studies with film studies and social studies. Turner's anthropology of performance, theory of social drama and the notion of ritual as a redressive action within social process allows us to view film as a ritual form, a reflective/redressive activity—an integral part of the human re-integrative active experience. Turner's anthropology of experience facilitates discussion on the place of ritual in modern cultures and promotes comparative studies of ritual and cinema, potentially beneficial for many interdisciplinary research areas.

**Ritual, Power and Religion.** As Grimes noted in *Ritual Criticism,* ritual aspirations are notoriously easy prey for political, economic, and media exploitation. Although the immanent ideology of ritual is associated with the Collective Body, ritual is constantly re-signified in various cultures for political ends, creating an untouchable sacred "political body" in the realms of cultural and social life. That is why the mechanisms of signification and resignification of the ritual models by ideology is an important subject for research, particularly with regard to film, which has been deemed "the most important of all the arts" for the means of political demagogy.

The integration of ritual symbolism with ideology, especially of an aggressive type, generates phenomena defined by Smith as "quasi-religions."[6] Although they are ideological chimeras, quasi-religions play an extraordinary role in political history. Inevitably they have become an object of interest for the self-reflective antitotalitarian Soviet film culture. Quasi-religions, a mixture of ritualism with ideology, manifest themselves in the cults of the corpse, scorpion, dragons and other monsters, which are mistakenly worshipped as sacred instructors and which were exposed and "exorcised" in *Commissar, Repentance, Andrei Roublev, Scorpion's Gardens, Whiskers, Festival of Neptune, Scarecrow* and many other Soviet/post-Soviet films.

In Bakhtin's philosophy of the Collective Body one indeed may discover a religious aspect (as was the case with the theories by Solov'ev and Florensky).[7] Being also a modelling system, any powerful theory has a tendency to be transformed from a *model of* (explanation) into a *model for* (imitation). However, the main value of the discussed above ritual-philosophical systems is in their endless self-restoration and self-materialization within the structures of mass media and culture. Their ritual modality re-creates, reinforces and stimulates the search for new forms of integrity within the humankind—inter-racial? inter-social? inter-national? inter-gender, and inter-generational? Ritual facilitates the search for the "elusive sense of community" (Hardin) and "reintegrated selfhood" (Grimes)—a well-coordinated and capable "unity for the sake of the common future."

**Ritual as (Re)Signifying Process.** Clark's book on the Soviet novel contributed to the ritual studies of Soviet culture and investigated the expropriation and manipulation of ritual symbols and narrative structures by Soviet ideology for the political purposes of the regime (predominantly in the 1920-30). The present thesis explores the mirror /alternative cultural process—**utilization and re-signification of ritual symbolism by the antitotalitarian film culture of 1960-90.** Ritual symbolism has enormous power in any culture, especially Russian and Soviet, all periods of which submit to a great extent to the rules of ritual consciousness.[8]

**Ritual Defamiliarization.** Ritual symbolism employs the deepest levels of the "collective unconscious," determining popular beliefs and social behavior. However, residing on the subliminal levels of culture, ritual is as profoundly "forgotten" as the *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* could be. Perceived on the rational level as "archaic," ritual symbolism fulfills two major and controversial functions: defamiliarization and revelation. Filled with bizarre grotesque imagery, with "mysteriousness" and "monstrousness," ritual symbolism effectively functions as artistic defamiliarization and metaphorization, something that (film)art cannot productively function without and which contains the very essence of the artistic form. At the same time, carrying within the ritual structure primary information about the laws of life and nature, sometimes forgotten by the society, ritual symbolism re-establishes sacred values, functioning as the revelation of the truth, hidden but vitally significant for the well-being of the community and the Collective Body of the people.

Defamiliarization is frequently mentioned as the common method of interpretive anthropology, artistic expression and ritual symbolism. Cinema first turned to ritual as a powerful means of defamiliarization, as the works by Eisenstein and Ivanov have shown. Eisenstein saw in ritual a basis for creating a powerful film language. There are subjective and objective reasons for this: (film)art turns to ritual to refresh its expression, to revitalize itself, while ritual manifests itself through modern art, according to the ritual need of society. Ritual effectively uses defamiliarization in many ways, in particular, by the means of dissociative law and the presence of functional dissociative agents. Interpretive anthropology often defamiliarizes one culture through another. This study, for example, presents the (re)interpretation of the Soviet society via a symbolic "ritual society"—in order to rise important cultural issues that are of interest for any society. Thus, various areas of culture, art and social sciences may benefit from the highly effective methods of *ritual defamiliarization,* which has a multifunctional significance.

**Ritual Revelation.** The semantics of the sacred message is focused on the process of ritual revelation. As the ritual paradigm inevitably leads us to its high point, the communication of the sacred message, it is important to understand what is considered *sacra* by a given culture at a given period of history. If Stalinist culture tended to sacralize the collectivity and the dictator (The Father of the people), the culture of thaw intended to sacralize the individual and his right for freedom. This should not be construed as individualism, a separation from the Collective Body. In the post-Stalinist period, the individual hero in Soviet film culture no longer tolerated instruction on how to connect to the others. Now, the individual himself had to decide and feel who is part of his ritual circle and what is the nature of this sacred connection. The answers, entirely new and unpredictable, had to come as a revelation of truth—something to be acquired/searched for in a difficult *ritual journey,* as that of protagonists Andrei Roublev and Dmitrii Shostakovich, the heros of *Solaris* and *Scarecrow,* as well as the collective spectator-protagonist (choir) of *Repentance* and *Scorpion's Gardens.* Film-ritual paradoxically unites the nearest perspective with the most distant (revelation via defamiliarization), the perspectives of the ancient ritual tradition with the urgent issues of our time, thus placing film in the context of the Great Time.

**The Mind of Cinema.** A paradoxical and controversial question is in place. Who, if not the movie tycoons, producers, writers, directors the world over, embodies the *Mind and Conscience of Cinema?* Who represents the primary architect and originator of cinematic meanings and messages? Who indeed is that very "sacred instructor" showing us the moving pictures, dream-worlds in the darkness of the cinema? Following Bakhtin's idea that culture is the function of the Collective Body and Turner's conception that the community organizes itself through culture, one can offer a provoking conclusion that it is indeed the Collective Body who is in charge of all art, all literature, the stories narrated and shown, the other worlds of dream and the pictures of the sacred journeys projecting for us on screen. Of course, a humorous image immediately comes to mind—of some Giant Old (Wo?)Man, possibly with the white beard (or, maybe also with the huge breasts?), who, smiling mysteriously and wisely, is projecting from outerspace a beam of light to the charmed people on earth glued to their screens in a search of a thrill and meaning.

At the dawn of a new millennium, it seems from a philosophical perspective, that a reconsideration of our notions of the collective, of the possible vital unity (global village?) capable of re-integrating all different "kinds" and providing for their survival is the most topical issue of the new cultural condition—that of the ideological dominance of the corporate economy, virtual communication via virtual realities and the postcolonial tendency towards cultural autonomies /diversities. The philosophical re-interpretation of the concept of vital unity (the Collective Body is one possible mode of it)—a former idea of the collective—discredited by twentieth-century political history and abandoned by culture, seems to return to the cultural arena as a topical theoretical and humanitarian issue. The search for new forms of unity in reality, fundamental and also efficient, as well as the ways of its theorization in our particular cultural situation, makes the philosophy of the Collective Body so essential in our time. The Collective Body, as a macrocultural issue inevitably leads to a reconsideration of major notions in film, literary and cultural theories as a conceptual sphere of human organization. Such fascinating theoretical issues as dialogue, polyphony, multiple vista, death-rebirth archetype, narrative paradigm, deep structure, chronotope, ritual, etc., appear interconnected and receive in the context of the Collective Body a new "panoramic" conceptual perspective.

**Multiple/Composite Protagonist.** The individual protagonist, who emerged in the lyric and tragedy, has had the floor for centuries; the idea he had to express he had his options. But he has been too confused about his own identity and too isolated and distanced from others for a long time in the realm of culture. His integrity is now profoundly questioned by the postmodern cultural philosophy. The Collective Body-theory is not about eliminating the individual protagonist and displacing him/her by the collective-composite one. But it is about the dramatic space where the individual character would be able to question and re-identify the sacred connection with the whole, and his/her ever changing role with respect to the immanent cycles within the Collective Body. The Collective Body is not a frozen, completed, but an open concept; it is manifest in culture in a variety of changing images, thus provoking ongoing discussion on its very essence. The Collective Body philosophy, as a cultural agenda, facilitates comprehension of an urgent issue: if we are the part of the whole, what kind of unity is it, what unity is a true, a vital one, capable of surviving and uniting alienated individuals in the post-totalitarian and postmodern world.

**The Collective Body Issue.** In this thesis, the Collective Body theory functions as an interpretation of the Soviet/post-Soviet film culture, while cinema helps to explain the Collective Body, which reveals itself as its main cultural concern. The Collective Body concept is shown to be inseparable from the Bakhtinian category of the Great Time, which connects to film culture by organizing the chronotope; the latter in its turn is connected to the *sacra.* In the words of Bakhtin, when the immanent unity of time (Great Time, the united chronotope of ritual, and of the Collective Body), disintegrates then the collective and individual life sequences are separated.[9] Rephrasing the concluding words of Bakhtin's notes on the human sciences, one can read: there is no first and last being (meaning) and no limits for their dialogical context—it goes to the infinite past and the endless future.[10]

The Collective Body is present simultaneously in all the points of historical time, manifesting itself especially vividly in the co-joints of Great Time—rites of passage, "big moments" of the individuals and cultures. The Collective Body's symbolic imagery can be found everywhere in art, particularly in cinema. However, the Collective Body "itself" cannot be found anywhere: it exists in the realms of culture and philosophy (in the image and thought) rather than in reality. Drastic transformations of one conceptual model of the Collective Body (as a dominant ritual symbol) into another mark crucial cultural transitions—the process shown as a (re)signification of the Collective Body in Soviet film culture in this dissertation.

The Collective Body philosophy is certainly not a call for modern society to return to the "tribal villages." In fact, tribal society was not a material embodiment of the Collective Body, the paradise of equality and brotherhood.[11] And, needless to spy, ancestor spirits have never been real "community members." The Collective Body is a modality, of the same kind as Bakhtin's carnival or Turner's *communitas*: never existing in reality, they manifest (re)organizing cultural forces and vitally important philosophical modes. The philosophy of the Collective Body, introduced in the thesis, should not be read as a social program: it does not deal with reality; it addresses the issues of socio-cultural vision. The Collective Body is neither social, nor sociological model; it is characteristically a cultural model, a root-metaphor, appealing to poetic rather than rational logic.[12] In this it is a concept fruitful for development in the realm of the humanities rather than social sciences. Precisely because it is difficult to grasp on the rational level, the idea of the Collective Body has always generated an enormous amount of related metaphors and forms of artistic representation; thus, it can be also defined as an image-generating cultural concept. In respect to the representation of society's search for identity, the Collective Body does not negate existing social models, but adds to them an essential dimension, which has been displaced from the avant-scene of theory for obvious reasons: the ideas of the collective have been profoundly discredited in twentieth-century history. These ideas have had great appeal for political opportunists precisely because they possess enormous power as all-penetrating ritual symbolism. The idea of the Collective Body tends to be taken advantage of because, having a profound effect on the societies, it can be turned by ideology into a psychological weapon. It has happened in twentieth-century Russia, possibly, because the intellectual, abstract modality of Collective Body-type concepts has not been comprehended by Russian Marxists, who confused a social utopia with a social model. Bakhtin's concept of the Collective Body cannot be appreciated and adequately understood outside the context of Russian philosophy, the natural development of which has been interrupted by the Bolshevik revolution. Interest in Organicism, Cosmism and other alternative trends of Russian philosophy has been recently revived, and the Collective Body, as one of its root-paradigms, deserves attention beyond the context of post-war Soviet culture and cinema.[13]

Although the Collective Body perspective frequently deals with issues of sexuality, it bears remembering, that it is focused on the ecology of life-continuation, rather than the issue of individual desire. In Bakhtin's system, the material is inseparable from the spiritual: the focus of the Collective Body's agenda is not only on (pro)creation, but also the transformation of the Collective Body (with)in time and the transmission of the sacred knowledge—the ultimate condition of the Collective Body's survival. Unlike Freud, who emphasized the need for the determined separation of the generations, Bakhtin stresses the generational bond as an uninterrupted account within the unity of the Great Time. The two viewpoints, complementing each other, represent a dialectical perspective on the dynamics of the Collective Body.

The Collective Body is also useful in the context of new developments in semiotics defined as quantum semiotics. It is a new, rather metaphorical term, which may be interpreted as a study of multidimensional, dynamic and diachronic systems. The Collective Body represents a semiotic model which clarifies a subject and a method of quantum semiotics. Collective Body is especially useful in this respect because it illustrates this complex area with the vital, lucid human categories (connections, values and needs) close and intelligible to every person. The Collective Body theory is also crucial for understanding the very subject of the semiotic anthropology of (film)culture. Without the Collective Body-concept this method could not been developed, because the traditional concept of the individual protagonist is insufficient for the study of macrocultural ritual processes. The Collective Body is a theoretical hypothesis, rather than a thesis intended to replace existing concepts and established notions. It is, indeed, a concept difficult for understanding, particularly within a strictly rational logic, and as a working concept, it may be more efficient in the humanities rather than in social sciences. I would like to stress the openly polemical nature of conceptualizing the Collective Body (by Bakhtin, and also in the present text) in order to challenge the notions that seem to be established and to raise a debate on them. The Collective Body has been manifest in the numerous symbols of world culture, every epoch and ideology tend to re- and misinterpret it. Communism may also be considered as a misinterpretation of the Collective Body and its misuse as a social model. Precisely because of its tendency to be misunderstood and politicized, the Collective Body is important as a subject of scholarly research. Our contemporary culture faces the (ritual) need to redefine the very notion of the whole, connection and unity after an age of "programmatic breach"—the well-known tendency toward historical discontinuity, alienation, social individualism and solipsism that continues to permeate contemporary writing.[14] The Collective Body is especially interesting and fruitful as a post-totalitarian and post-colonial concept. At a time when the notions of the collective and community have undergone destruction from radical scepticism, the Collective Body concept may serve as a mode of unity quest, healing and addressing the need in new vital forms of re-connection between individuals, and between the past and the future. The polemical concept of the Collective Body of Genus (*rodovoe telo*), explored in the context of the semiotic anthropology of Soviet film culture, can stimulate discussion on new modalities of human association, effective and vital in the post-postmodern age.

Notes:

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The dissertation will be further developed into a book, working title: *Rituals, Symbols, and Shadows: Semiotic Anthropology and Soviet Film Culture.*

[1] This study intentionally excluded discussion of the visual imagery of ritual symbolism—an extremely interesting topic for future analysis.

[2] See, for example, Artwood, Lawton and Anninsky.

[3] *Aesthetics of the Verbal Art,* 372/"Towards the Methodology for the Human Sciences," 169. Bakhtin further writes: 'Structuralism is characteristic of formalization and depersonalization... but I see everywhere the voices, and the dialogical relationships among them." These voices may be also interpreted as the voices of those who are the dead or living segments within the eternal Collective Body. Bakhtin emphasizes "The living in nature (organic). Everything non-organic in the process of life is being involved in it," 372.

[4] *Aesthetics of the Verbal Art,* 352. In his original text Bakhtin uses not "destroyed' but the word *umervschlennyi* (killed) context, which is applicable in Russian only to a living being/substance. The dialectics of context and code in the case of ritual criticism is quite paradoxical and unusual; in this open/opening structure, the advantage of semiotic anthropology over structuralist semiotics (which Bakhtin

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targeted his debate at in this quotation) is highly visible and stimulating for future theorization.

[5] See Hardin, "'Ritual' in Recent Criticism."

[6] See John E. Smith. *Quasi-Religions: Humanism, Marxism and Nationalism* (London, 1994).

[7] Even Turner's "emphasis on ritual process, however theoretically useful it may be, could also serve as rationalization for a new cult of growth and process," Grimes, *Ritual Criticism*, 27.

[8] For the "complete" picture of the historical dialectics of ritual symbolism in Russian culture, the models developed by Clark and that of the present thesis have to be complemented with similar studies on ritual symbolism in the pre-revolutionary Russian and post-Soviet periods.

[9] Bakhtin, *Dialogical Imagination*, 217.

[10] Bakhtin, "*K metodologii gumanitarnykh nauk*" (Notes on the Methodology for the Human Sciences) in *Aesthetics of the Verbal Art*, 373.

[11] It was a classless society indeed, but constructed of its own system of ranks and hierarchies, as is well-known now from social anthropology.

[12] Paul Colilli, an advanced semiotician and modern cultural thinker, emphasizes the poetic versus rational logic in contemporary theory. Colilli offers poetic logic as a philosophical mode, alternative to both nihilistic materialism and a critical spirituality. He transcribes archaic thought onto the pages of modern consciousness, emphasizing "living signs of poetry and philosophy." See Paul Colilli, *The Idea of a Living Spirit: Poetic Logic as a Contemporary Theory* (Toronto, 1997). For more on his interesting approach towards semiotics, see his *Signs of the Hermetic Imagination* (Toronto, 1993).

[13] See, for example, the journal *Russian Studies in Philosophy*, 1993-1997.

[14] With respect to the representations of the Collective Body in cinema and its axiological value, one can point out, rephrasing Clark and Holquist, that culture "is not a prison-house, it is an eco-system." See, Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge, 1984), 27.

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Russian Culture, Semiotics,
Film Studies, Anthropology, Culturology

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